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Five Cong. legislators threaten to quit over Kolar LS candidate

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Higher Education Minister M.C. Sudhakar

Factionalism in the Kolar unit of the Congress came to the fore on Wednesday as high drama unfolded with five Congress legislators, including a Minister, threatening to resign over the possibility of the party giving ticket to Chikka Peddanna, son-in-law of Food and Civil Supplies Minister K.H. Muniyappa, from the Kolar (reserved) constituency for the Lok Sabha elections. Mr. Muniyappa has also been a seven-time MP.

The drama unfolded in full media gaze with the legislators announcing in Vidhana Soudha that they would resign.

The three MLAs – Higher Education Minister M.C. Sudhakar (Chintamani), Kothur G. Manjunath (Kolar), and K.Y. Nanje Gowda (Malur), and two MLCs – Anil Kumar and Naseer Ahmed (political secretary to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah), who threatened to quit, demanded that the ticket be given to a candidate from the 'Right' sect of Scheduled Castes and not to Mr. Peddanna, who belongs to the 'Left' sect of the Scheduled Castes.

Another Congress MLA S.N. Narayanaswamy (Bangarapet) from the district too demanded that the ticket be given to a SC 'Right' candidate.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Priest can give CAA eligibility certificate, says govt. helpline

It is a mandatory certificate to be submitted along with other documents by the applicants on the portal; as per the rules, the certificate can be issued by a 'locally reputed community institution'

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A local priest may issue an "eligibility certificate" under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 to validate the religion of an applicant, according to a response received by *The Hindu* through the Union Home Ministry's helpline on CAA.

The certificate, a mandatory document, is to be enclosed along with an affidavit and other documents that the applicants are to upload on the CAA portal. "The reasons for which applicant wishes to acquire Indian citizenship" must also be stated.

On March 11, the Ministry notified the Citizenship Amendment Rules, 2024, enabling the implementation of the CAA. On March 21, it launched the helpline number 1032 "for assistance and information" on the CAA, so that "applicants can make free call from anywhere in India from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m".

The certificate is to be issued by a "locally reputed community institution". When *The Hindu* called the helpline on March 26 to seek information on its format, the person attending the call said, "It can be on a blank sheet of paper or on a judicial paper with a stamp value of ₹10." Asked who can issue the certificate, *The Hindu* was told that "any local *pujari* can be asked to issue it".

When the rules were notified, the Ministry did not specify the authority or the body that can issue the certificate. A source said on Wednesday: "Any institution which has the trust of people can issue the certificate. The final decision to grant citizenship will be taken by the empowered committee, the local institution is only recommending that they belong to a particular faith."

The form says that the person issuing the certificate will have to specify their name and confirm that the applicant belongs to one of the six communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan and are known to them. They must certify that "to the best of my knowledge and belief, he/she belongs to Hindu/ Sikh/ Buddhist/ Jain/Parsi/Christian community and continues to be a member of the above mentioned community".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Route to citizenship

A brief outline of the application process under the CAA

- The entire process is online but applicants will have to present themselves on an appointed day before a committee, which will verify the documents
- The applicants have to submit a clutch of documents, which include an eligibility certificate to validate the religion of the applicant. Any local priest can certify the faith of the persons
- The reasons for which applicant wishes to acquire an Indian citizenship is also to be stated

1032 Helpline

India strongly objects to U.S. comments on arrest of Delhi CM

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday summoned a U.S. diplomat and expressed "strong objection" to the remarks of the spokesperson of the U.S. State Department on the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a case of alleged corruption.

In a statement, the External Affairs Ministry said that "fellow democracies should respect each other's sovereignty", and highlighted India's "independent judiciary".

"We take strong objection to the remarks of the spokesperson of the U.S. State Department about certain legal proceedings in India. In diplomacy, states are expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others. This responsibility is even more so in case of fellow democracies. It could otherwise end up setting unhealthy precedents," the Ministry said.

On Monday, the spokesperson of the State Department had said that the U.S. government hoped Mr. Kejriwal's case would be treated through a "timely legal process".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

> We encourage a fair, transparent, and timely legal process for Kejriwal
> **U.S. STATE DEPT.**

> In diplomacy, states are expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others
> **MEA**

NEARBY

Seers urge BJP to replace Joshi as candidate

HUBBALLI
Veerashaiva-Lingayat seers on Wednesday set a deadline for the BJP high command to replace Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in Dharwad Lok Sabha constituency. » Page 4

Cafe blast: NIA raids in Shivamogga, T.N.

BENGALURU
The NIA, probing The Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, conducted raids and questioned suspects in Shivamogga, and Chennai and Ramanathapuram districts of T.N. on Wednesday. » Page 2

EC issues notices to Shrinate, Ghosh for 'offensive' remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

Supriya Shrinate

The Election Commission on Wednesday slapped showcause notices on the Congress's Supriya Shrinate and the BJP's Dilip Ghosh for their "offensive", "insulting", and "undignified" comments against BJP candidate and actor Kangana Ranaut and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, respectively.

Their remarks were "undignified and in bad taste" and violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), the EC said in separate statements. The MCC has been in force since March 16 when the schedule for the Lok Sabha election was announced.

Ms. Shrinate claimed that "many others" had access to her social media accounts, blaming one of them for the "extremely inappropriate" comments made on her X handle.

After being slammed by his party, Mr. Ghosh said he was "sad" as his language had been described as unparliamentary, but claimed he had merely countered Ms. Banerjee's statements.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

STP must for apartments with over 120 units

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has provided relief to apartment communities in areas with underground drainage lines, essentially in the core city, by amending rules for in-situ sewage treatment plants (STPs). Henceforth, only apartment complexes with over 120 units and producing over 80 kilolitres per day (KLD) of sewage will have to install an in-situ STP.

At present, an STP is mandatory for projects above 50 units. However, smaller STPs are capital-intensive and inefficient. The Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF) lobbied hard for this amendment.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

Money heist: ₹50 lakh stolen from van carrying cash to ATM in Kerala's Uppala

The Hindu Bureau
KASARAGOD

Smash and grab: The van from which ₹50 lakh, which was meant to fill an ATM, was stolen in Kerala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In a brazen daylight theft, ₹50 lakh was stolen from a van that was taking the money to fill cash vending machines, at Uppala here in Kerala on Wednesday.

The incident occurred outside an ATM of the Axis Bank around 2 p.m.

The van involved in the incident belongs to a private agency, Secure Valley. Notably, it arrived at the location without security personnel.

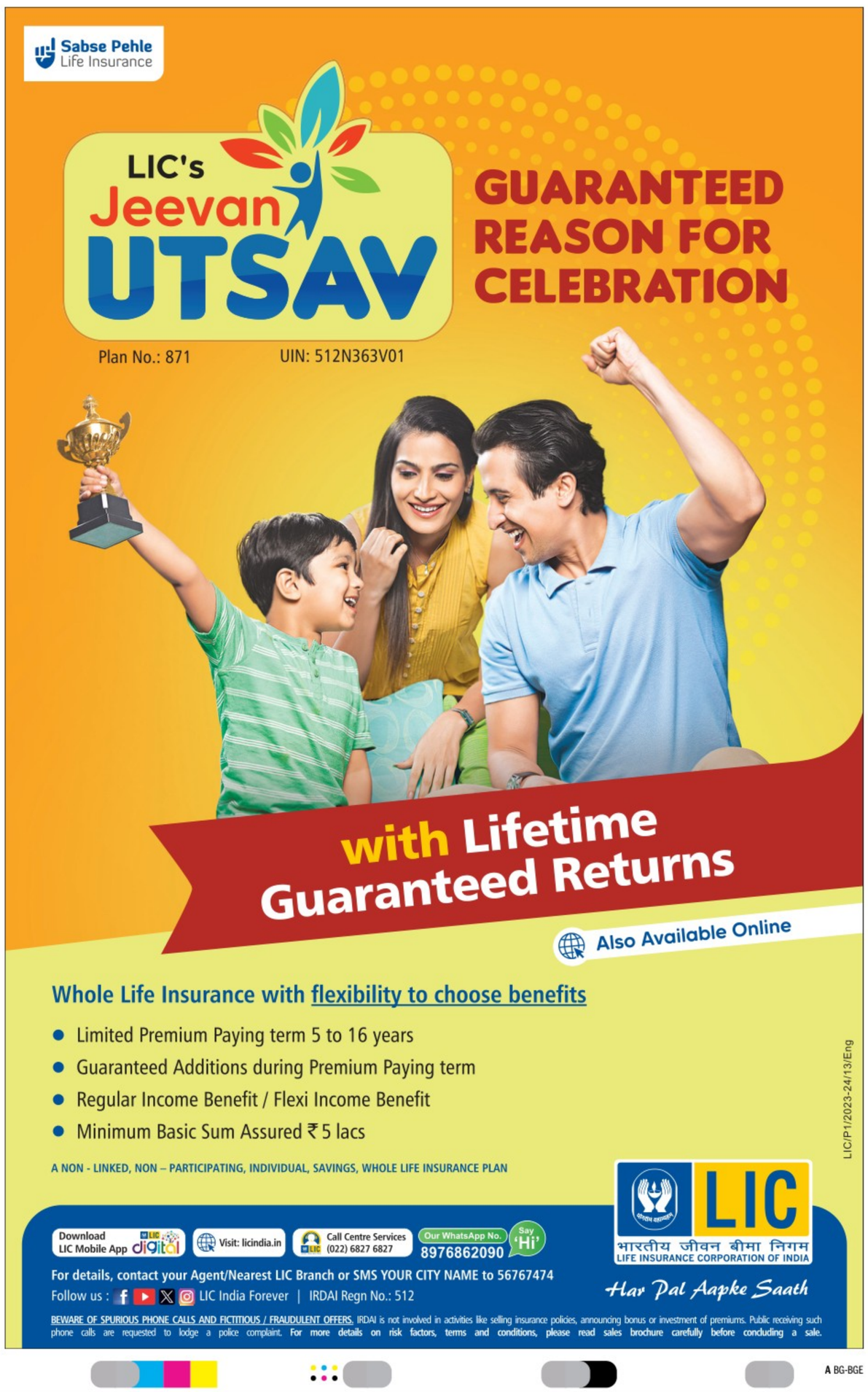
An officer at the Manjeshwar police station said the theft occurred due to a security lapse on the part of the agency's staff.

"The staff had to fill ₹20 lakh in a bank ATM, but they took out two bundles of ₹50 lakh each. They took one bundle into the ATM and left one on the back seat of the vehicle. Though the vehicle was locked, there was no one inside it and there was no grille on the rear windows," said the officer. The thief broke the right side rear window and took away the cash, he said.

The police detained the driver and seized the van.

District Police chief P. Bijoy told media that there was indication that only one person was behind the theft. Many CCTV cameras in the area are not working due to road construction. The police have initiated an investigation.

(With PTI inputs)



Shot-stopper Panthoi Chanu eager to prove her worth during Australian stint

She is open to embrace the challenges at Metro United WFC; her mentor the legendary Bala Devi is elated for the goalkeeper and believes the move would boost women's football in India

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Goalkeeper Elangbam Panthoi Chanu, a member of the Indian team, is excited to become the first footballer from the country to play professionally in Australia.

Panthoi, who has been signed by Adelaide-based Metro United, looks forward to prove her worth and learn during her stint in Australia, where she will play in the South Australian Women's National Premier League.

The 28-year-old gritty goalkeeper, who has been mentored by the legendary Bala Devi, is open to embrace the new challenge. "I don't know much about their playing style, which is different from ours. I will try to adapt and play well. I will have six months, which is a long time and we don't get to play that long in India. I will try to gain from that experience. I have to show that I am good," said Panthoi, before leaving for Australia.

Panthoi, backed by Women in Sports, caught the eye of Adelaide United FC during a trial, attended by head coaches from prominent teams such as Western United FC Melbourne, Perth SC, WFC Dinamo Zagreb, and Marbella FC. Following their recommendation, Panthoi found her way to Metro United WFC. This significant move not only serves as a boost to her confidence but also provides a platform for her to excel and gain valuable experience in the global football arena.

The role

Metro United head coach Paul Morris explained the role of the Indian recruit. "Panthoi will come in as our first choice goalkeeper. She will train with the first team. We will use her experience and knowledge. We have a young 18-year-old goalkeeper who is our reserve goalkeeper. How it works in Australia is we have a fully professional league, which is the Women's A-League, in which Adelaide United participates in. We play one level down, which is the Women's National Premier League (WNPL). We have 10 teams.

"We are delighted to have signed Panthoi for the 2024 WNPL season here at Adelaide. She is a top class goalkeeper with international experience, she possesses all the qualities you look for in a goalkeeper and will be a great addition to our squad, everyone associated with Metro United is looking forward to welcoming Panthoi," said Morris.

"Panthoi will train with Adelaide United with full-time professionals, full-time coaches. It will be a great opportunity and experience for her to train alongside them, to work with a full time professional club."

She will play professional football in Australia until the conclusion of the season in September this year.

Remarkable rise

Panthoi's stint in Australia should be worthwhile as the country has risen remarkably in women's football and has developed a favourable culture for the sport. It hosted the Women's World Cup in 2023 and creditably advanced to the semifinals. Of late, the Australia national team's matches have seen record-breaking attendance, with every match being sold out. This surge in support reflects the growing strength and appeal of women's football in Australia, promising an exciting future for the sport at all levels.

Going back to her 10-year-old association with Panthoi, Bala Devi says, "I have known Panthoi since the 2014 National championships. She was young and was passionate about the sport. Since then, I have been supporting her. She had two shin injuries at the same place within one year, first in January 2021 and then in January 2022. The shin of her right leg was split horizontally. Normally, a player would have quit the sport after picking up such an injury, but Panthoi fought back brilliantly.

"The one-month stint in Spain last year really taught her a lot about managing her injuries, exposed her to good training and built her confidence."

Panthoi made her comeback in a friendly against Nepal last year, showcased her goalkeeping prowess in India's recent matches against Kosovo and Hong Kong in Turkey. "I became mentally stronger after my injuries. I was determined and told myself, 'Mere paas jo talent hai, woh sobko dikhana hai,'" notes Panthoi, who has represented India in under-16 and under-19 before graduating to the elite level and donning the National colours 12 times.

> Everybody wanted me to pursue education, but football is also education. Earlier, girls were not encouraged to take to sports, but it's good that girls are now coming out and playing

Panthoi, who began playing club football with her stint with Eastern Sporting Union (ESU) in 2012, moved to Manipur Police and returned to ESU before joining Metro United.

Staying calm

Hailing from Keirak village, which is an hour's drive from the state capital Imphal, Panthoi stayed calm even during the phase of violence in her state Manipur.

"During the troubled times, we used to finish our dinner early, pack our bags and stay ready to get into the vehicle and leave (in case any problem arose). The situation is much better now," says Panthoi with a sense of optimism.

Coming from a state, which has produced plenty of top woman boxers and weightlifters, her love for football has been everything for Panthoi - who as an under-12 footballer once met multiple World champion boxer state-mate M.C. Mary Kom in Bhopal but did not know who she was. Football has been pushing her to do better as she believes in the values the sport teaches

"Everybody wanted me to pursue education, but football is also education. Earlier, girls were not encouraged to take to sports, but it's good that girls are now coming out and playing," said Panthoi.

While wishing Panthoi all the best, Bala sees this as a stepping stone for Indian women footballers. "It was not easy and there were not any opportunities to play overseas. Now several of our girls are going overseas to play, which is a good thing," said Bala.

THE GIST

- Panthoi, backed by Women in Sports, caught the eye of Adelaide United FC during a trial, attended by head coaches from prominent teams
- Bala Devi feels the one-month stint in Spain last year taught Panthoi a lot about managing injuries and exposed her to quality training
- Panthoi began playing club football with Eastern Sporting Union in 2012, moved to Manipur Police and returned to ESU

Rameshwaram cafe blast: NIA conducts simultaneous raids in Shivamogga and Tamil Nadu

Four persons, from whom mobile phones were seized in Chennai, have been served notices to appear before the National Investigation Agency in Bengaluru tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), probing Bengaluru's The Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, conducted simultaneous raids and questioned several suspects in Shivamogga, Karnataka, Chennai, and Ramanathapuram districts in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday.

NIA sleuths on Wednesday raided the residences of Mussavir Hussain Shazib and Abdul Matheen Taha in Thirthahalli. The duo are accused in the 2020 Al Hind IS module case registered in Suddaguntepalya and have been absconding since. They are also said to be the kingpins of the Thirthahalli module and accused in the Mangaluru cooker blast of November 2022. Given the similarity in the timer and detonator devices in the IEDs used in The Rameshwaram Cafe blast and the cooker blast, agencies have suspected the role of the same module.

A file photo of bomb squad and NSG personnel at The Rameshwaram Cafe after the blast. PTI

Sources said by trailing the baseball cap worn by the bomber and reportedly recovered near the scene of the crime after the blast, NIA reportedly tracked down the shop in Chennai from where the cap was bought. NIA sleuths now believe the duo lived in Chennai before the blast, and Mussavir Hussain may have been the suspected bomber.

NIA sleuths also raided the houses of Mohammed Shariq and Aaraft Ali, both accused in the 2022 cooker blast and currently in prison. They also visited a mobile shop and served notice on two youths to present themselves before the NIA, Bengaluru, sources said.

Meanwhile, NIA teams raided four persons in Chennai, seized their mobile phones and served them notice to appear before the NIA, Bengaluru, for interrogation on Friday, sources said. Those raided in Chennai have been identified as Abuthahir, Liaqat Ali, Rahim and Abdul Rahim. NIA sleuths suspect they may have sheltered or provided logistical and financial support to Taaha and Hussain, who they suspect stayed in Chennai earlier this year.

NIA sleuths also raided Sheik Dawood in Ramanathapuram district and served him notice to appear before the NIA. He had been questioned by the NIA earlier in connection with other terror cases, in which he was suspected of sheltering the accused and financially aiding them, sources said.

Escoms told to provide multiple connections to residential consumers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After bringing about a single slab system for electricity charges in the LT category, the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) has directed electricity supply companies (Escoms) to allow LT residential consumers to avail multiple electricity connections on their residential premises.

The order was issued on March 26 following complaints from many consumers that Escoms are not sanctioning multiple connections.

"The Commission, in its 2024 tariff order, introduced a single slab for energy charges, allowing LT residential consumers to avail multiple connections to their premises as per their requirements," a senior KERC official said.

Solar transactions

To provide consumers an incentive to invest in renewable energy, the KERC had notified draft regulations for 'Peer to Peer Solar Energy Transactions' earlier this year. According to the draft regulations, consumers who had installed rooftop solar power systems could sell solar power to anyone according to the tariff fixed by the Commission through blockchain technology. Previously, the consumers were allowed to sell solar energy only to Escoms. Experts think that the system might lead participants to bear additional charges while selling electricity.

Consumers who had installed rooftop solar power systems can sell solar power to anyone according to the tariff fixed by the commission

"According to KERC's Terms and conditions for Green Energy Open Access Regulations, 2022, the consumers who will participate in this peer-to-peer transactions will also have to bear transmission and wheeling charges, cross-subsidy charges and a few other charges. More importantly, they would have to pay 9% electricity tax on grid supply unit rates," said M. G. Prabhakar, former member of KERC advisory committee.

He suggested that the Commission consider exempting participants from these additional charges, like in Delhi where this transaction method has been implemented, to encourage such transactions. Mr. Prabhakar also said that the KERC had not considered the fact that under Section 14 of Electricity Act 2003, it is mandatory to get a distribution licence to sell electricity in Karnataka.

A public hearing on the matter will be held by KERC on March 28 at 11 a.m. where interested consumers can submit their views, suggestions, and comments.

Timings
BENGALURU

THURSDAY, MAR. 28
RISE 06:18 SET 18:31
RISE 21:01 SET 08:02

FRIDAY, MAR. 29
RISE 06:18 SET 18:31
RISE 21:53 SET 08:43

SATURDAY, MAR. 30
RISE 06:17 SET 18:31
RISE 22:48 SET 09:28

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	23
Mysuru	36	22
Bengaluru	35	21

Bengaluru Today
35ºC A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34ºC The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be informed that my client has entered into an Agreement To Sell to purchase the schedule property from **Mrs. SUJATA MISHRA,** Daughter of Late Dr. B. Panda and wife of Mr. Rabindra Kumar Mishra, represented by her son, registered **General Power of Attorney Holder Mr. SIDDHANT MISHRA,** Son of Mr. Rabindra Kumar Mishra, Residing at Flat No. A 2103, Hiranandani Lake Verandahs, Begur Main Road, Hulimavu Bengaluru – 560 068,

Any person/s having any claim, right, title or interest in the schedule property may write to the undersigned with documentary proof ***within 10 days*** from the date of publication of this notice and if no valid objections are received within the stipulated time, my client will proceed to purchase the schedule property, subject to other terms of the said agreement of sale, with assumptions that there are no objections or claims from any person/s against my client purchasing the schedule property following the aforesaid agreement of sale.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that Residential Apartment **bearing No. B-404,** (which is carved out of Old Sy. No.100, New Sy. No.100/P1 measuring 01 Acre 13 Guntas, and in Sy. No.101 measuring 00 acres 12.67 Guntas and in Sy. No.103 measuring 05 acres 16 guntas of land, totally measuring 7 acres 1.67 Guntas, situated at Arekere, Arekere Sub- Division, Bangalore,) on the Fourth Floor of Block B in the project known as **"SAPPHIRE" in "SJR LUXURIA" measuring 1645.53 Sq fee**t of Super Built up area, 449.47 square feet a proportionate share in common areas such as Passage, Lobbies, Lifts, Staircase and other areas of common use and totally measuring 2095 Sq feet, and **879.23 square feet** of undivided right, with the right to use One Covered Car Parking space in the Basement Floor with all civil amenities and the apartment is bounded by:

East by: Entrance and Lobby in the fourth floor of Block B Sapphire in SJR LUXURIA, **West by:** Open towards open Space in Block B – Sapphire in SJR LUXURIA, **North by:** Apartment No. B – 405 in Fourth Floor of Block B – Sapphire In "SJR LUXURIA" **South by:** Apartment No. B-403 in Fourth Floor of Block B – Sapphire in SJR LUXURIA"

Sd/-
SIVA LAW ASSOCIATES, Advocates,
No. 22/1, 1st Floor, 7th Cross,
Behind Wilson Garden Police Station,
Wilsongarden, Bengaluru -560 027.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/113/2024
Dated: 19.03.2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

Name of Work	Appx. Value
Providing project management services for 1) Tumakuru-Chitradurga - Davanagere new Line project- Construction of New BG line between Chainage 19200 & chainage 171640 including electrical & Telecommunication works between Tolahunse (Ex) & Bharamasagar (Ex) stations on Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode. 2) Construction of New Railway line between chainage 171.640 and Chainage 142.920 (28.72 km) including Electrical, Signal & Telecommunication, works between Bharamasagar (Incl.) & Chitradurga (Excl.) stations in Tumakuru-Chitradurga- Davanagere New Line project.	Rs. 2,15,93,044

(Tender Ref. No. W.496/ PMS-TK-DVG-R-2)

Last date for submission of bids:
Up to 15:00 hrs. of 19.04.2024

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction Works / Bengaluru Cantonemnt
PUB/777/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
Tender Notice No. 10 MYS 2023-24
Dated : 29.02.2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Sl.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value
1	Numerical Transformer Differential Relay for 25 KV AC Traction as per RDSO specification No. TI/SPC/ PSI/PROTCT/6071 with A & C Slip No. 1. Make : Alind or Similar. Type-ANTD201. Tender No. L9245182	Rs. 28,99,260/-
2	Supply Commissioning and Demonstration of 250 LPH Portable Transformer Oil Filtration Plant as per the enclosed specification in Make : NACH, NISHA, CBS & CEE DEE. Tender No. L9245169	Rs. 26,43,200/-
3	Supply of 25KV Single Pole Vacuum Circuit Breaker including all accessories and fittings required for erection and commissioning. RDSO Specification TI/SPC/PSI/LVCBIN/0120 (DEC 2013) REV.0 with A & C Slip No. 1 or Latest. Make RDSO Approved Vendors. Tender No. L9245171	Rs. 34,81,590/-
4	Hard Drawn Grooved Copper Contact Wire, jointless, 107 Sq.mm. Made out of continuous cast copper wirerods. As per RDSO Specn. No. ETI/OHE/76 (6/97)A & C Slip No. 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6 Firm's Make : RDSO Approved Vendors. Tender No. L9245180	Rs. 39,62,727/-

Last date for submission of bids:
Up to 10:30 Hrs on 08-04-2024

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Materials Manager Mysuru
PUB/768/AAS/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby notified that my client has intended to purchase and entered an agreement of sale/absolute sale deed with **Smt. Nagarathna Rajendran** w/o Rajendran N S to purchase the schedule property. If any person/s, financial institution etc., having any claims/objection for the sale of schedule property in favour of my client may lodge their claims/objection with documentary evidence within **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the undersigned, failing which thereafter my client shall proceed to complete the transaction and no claims thereafter will be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of **Vacant Site No.1444** BBMP Katha 898/899/1444 BBMP ward no.5 in the layout named as Dr. Shivaram Karanath Nagar Layout formed by **The Ministry of Communications Employees Co-Operative Housing Society Ltd.,** situated at Sreerampuram, Jakkur, Sampigehalli and Venkateshpura villages yelahanka hobli, Yelahanka Taluk Bengaluru North Taluk, Bengaluru measuring **East to West : 80 ft , North to South 50ft, in Total 4000 sq ft,** bounded on East by - Site No. 1440, West by :Road, North by - Site No. 1443, South by - Site No. 1445

H. A. AMARNATH , Advocate
#272, 2nd Block Rt Nagar, Bangalore - 560 032.
Mobile NO: 98452 71943 | 97414 97390 | 78998 65859

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public are hereby notified that we **M/s Smart Asset Services India Pvt Ltd.,** having registered office at, 8th Floor, Delta Block, Sigma Tech Park, Near Ramagondanahalli, Varthur, Whitefield, Bangalore 560066, have filed a Suit before the Hon`ble CCH74- City Civil And Sessions Judge, Bengaluru in **OS No.25242/2024,** against **M/s Trishul Developers, Rep by Partners Mr. Niraj Mittal, Mr. O.P. Mittal, Mrs. Uma Mittal, & Mrs. Jyoti. Mittal,** in respect of **suit schedule property, total 144 flats fallen to their share,** situated at Shivanahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, Bengaluru, The Said Developer have developed the project by name **"Mittal Palms"** on the Sy.Nos.32/2, 32/3, 32/4, 33/3 and 33/4, measuring 3 Acre 13 guntas. The Hon'ble Civil Court after hearing the matter, was pleased to grant an Ad-interim order of injunction restraining M/s Trishul Developers, and its Partners Mr. Niraj Mittal, Mr. O.P. Mittal, Mrs. Uma Mittal, & Mrs. Jyoti. Mittal, **from alienating & creating charge over the Suit Schedule property, TOTAL 144 Flats fallen to their share in the said Project described in the schedule below.** And Hon'ble Court has also issued show cause notice on IA No.2 to the Developers and its Partners 1 to 5 calling up on them to explain as to why they should not be issued an order of attachment of the Schedule B property before Judgement or to furnish security for the suit claim.

The Public / Banks / NBFC / Investors/Prospective Purchasers are herewith advised and cautioned not to be induced to enter into any sale deed, Agreement to Sell, Lease, Mortgage, Exchange, advance loans, encumber or enter into any transactions concerning the suit Schedule Property, the 144 Apartments listed below, in any manner, with the above **Said Parties** or through their agents and attorney holders.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY / 144 Apartments

FLAT NOS.							
A-001	A-703	B-504	C-501	D-401	E-302	F-303	G-203
A-002	A-704	B-601	C-502	D-402	E-303	F-304	G-204
A-003	B-004	B-602	C-503	D-403	E-304	F-401	G-205
A-004	B-101	B-603	C-504	D-404	E-401	F-402	G-401
A-201	B-102	B-604	C-701	D-601	E-402	F-403	G-402
A-202	B-103	C-001	C-702	D-602	E-502	F-404	G-403
A-203	B-104	C-002	C-703	D-603	E-503	F-601	G-404
A-204	B-201	C-003	C-704	D-604	E-504	F-602	G-405
A-301	B-202	C-004	D-001	E-001	F-001	F-603	G-601
A-302	B-203	C-101	D-101	E-101	F-002	F-604	G-602
A-303	B-204	C-102	D-102	E-102	F-003	G-001	G-603
A-304	B-401	C-103	D-103	E-103	F-004	G-101	G-604
A-501	B-402	C-104	D-104	E-104	F-201	G-102	G-605
A-502	B-403	C-301	D-201	E-201	F-202	G-103	G-701
A-503	B-404	C-302	D-202	E-202	F-203	G-104	G-702
A-504	B-501	C-303	D-203	E-203	F-204	G-105	G-703
A-701	B-502	C-304	D-204	E-204	F-301	G-201	G-704
A-702	B-503	C-402	D-303	E-301	F-302	G-202	G-705

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

AUCTION PROGRAMME NOTICE No: S/XIII/01/2024-25

Following is the Schedule of E-Auction to be held during months of **April, May & June-2024** for Sale of on-line Scrap, Serviceable Locomotives and Depot Scrap under the jurisdictions of General Stores Depot / Hubballi and Mechanical General Stores Depot / Ashokapuram depots and Hubballi, Mysuru and Bengaluru Divisions of South Western Railway.

Types of Auction	Venue	April-2024		May-2024		June-2024	
E-Auction	General Stores Depot / Hubballi	4th	15th	3rd	16th	3rd	14th
	Mechanical General Stores Depot / Ashokapuram / Mysuru	10th	25th	7th	21st	6th	26th
	Hubballi Division	18th	29th	17th	30th	12th	28th
	Bengaluru Division	16th	26th	16th	29th	13th	27th
	Mysuru Division	8th	22nd	6th	20th	4th	20th

Sale of Serviceable Locomotives : Following Seven (7) number Condemned, Surplus, Under Aged and Serviceable Locomotives are in E-Auction of Senior Divisional Materials Manager / Bengaluru viz WDG3A-13037, 13038, 13054 (Three locos available in E-Auction Catalogue) & WDG3A, 13031, 13056, WDM3A-14082 & 14084 (These Four Locos will be part of subsequent E-Auctions).

You all are requested to actively participate in the above scheduled e-Auction, For details please contact Deputy Chief Material Manager / General Stores Depot / Hubballi (0836-2363466 / 9731668760), Deputy Chief Material Manager / Mechanical General Stores Depot / Ashokapuram (0821-2480171 / 9731665756), Senior Divisional Material Manager / Hubballi (0836-2363497 / 9731668750), Senior Divisional Material Manager / Bengaluru (080-22873081 / 9731666750), Senior Divisional Material Manager / Mysuru (0821-2420817 / 9731667750). For Locos Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer / DSL / Krishnarajapuram - 9731666451 & SSE/DSL/Krishnarajapuram - 9731666482

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in/E-auction

PUB/771/AAS/PRB/SWR/2023-24
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Hubballi
South Western Railway - SWR southwesternrailway_swr SWRRLY southwesternrailway SWRRLY

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JYOTI BANSAL, W/o. Sandeep Bansal, R/at 92, 1st Floor, Horamavu, Bang–43 have changed my name from JYOTI RANI to JYOTI BANSAL for all future purposes by affidavit 27–03–2024 sworn before Notary Chandra Shekar Y R.

I, DIVYA Ramachandran Iyer/ Divya Iyer R/ Divya Iyer Ramachandran/ Divya R Iyer, W/o Vikash Shroff, R/a No.201, Elegant Lloyd, No.1, Lloyd Road, Cooke Town, Bengaluru-560005 have changed my name to Divya Iyer vide affidavit dt: 27.03.2024 sworn before Notary L.Gopalakrishna, B'lore

I, JYOTHI Sree B U, W/ o Yusuf Shariff R, R/at No. 289, 1st Floor, 7th Main Official Colony, Jayanagar 3rd Block East, Bangalore-560011, have changed my name from Jyothi Sree B U to Seema Shariff vide affidavit dated 27-03-2024 before Notary K.V.Mani, Bengaluru.

PERSONAL

LOST & FOUND

AFFIDAVIT
(Document Lost)
I, Nagaveni Shankar W/o Sri S.M. Shankar currently residing at 243/3,18th cross, Sadashiv Nagar, Bangalore would like to pledge through the certification that the property Sy. No 54 plot number 244, situated at Dasarahalli, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar, KR Puram, Bangalore.
Resident certificate (Sale deed) is lost and I have registered a complaint against the same in a police station and obtained a copy of it. Now I pledge through this certification regarding the publication of the former resident certificate (sale deed).
I would like to pledge any sole responsibility through the certification for any upcoming consequences of the same.
Nagaveni Shankar
Date: 25/3/2024
Place: Maddur

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- II, AT BENGALURU
4th Floor, Telephone House Building, Raja Bhavan Road, BENGALURU-560 001 IN THE MATTER OF
O. A No. 1083/2023

Between
ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
Versus
Mr. Allasandra Raquel Christopher & another
...Defendants

DEFENDANTS No.1 and 2 :
1. Mrs. Allasandra Raquel Christopher, Wife of Siddharth Sudhakar, Aged about 40 years, Residing at Flat No. RAB 311, Purva Riviera Apts. AECS Layout, Near Spice Garden, Marathahalli, Bangalore- 560 037, PAN No. AIPPC2170G, PH. 9611304736.
2. Mr. Siddharth Christopher, Son of Kalavar Sudhakar Shetty, Aged about 41 years, Residing at Flat No. RAB 311, Purva Riviera Apts. AECS Layout, Near Spice Garden, Marathahalli, Bangalore-560 037, PH. 9611304736.

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANT No.1 AND 2 UNDER RULE 23 (VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY PAPER PUBLICATION

WHEREAS the Applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 against you for recovery of a sum of **Rs. 72,04,254.22/- (Rupees Seventy-Two Lakhs Four Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty-Four and Twenty-Two Paise only)** together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.

You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication of this summons or on **31/07/2024** at **11.00 A.M.** in person or by pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this **21st day of March, 2024.**

By order of the Tribunal Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Bengaluru

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 26th ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-20)
O.S. No. 25191/2023

BETWEEN :
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore-560001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Mansi Singh
D/o. Mr. Anil Kumar Singh
Aged about 24 years,
fxcol@yahoo.co.in
Phone No. 8041216669.
....PLAINTIFF

AND :
Mr. Kamalesh B. S
S/o. Shankare Gowda,
Aged Major, No.415, 80 Feet Road, 2nd Phase Giri Nagar BANGALORE-560 085.
Also At
Mr. Kamalesh B. S
No. 344, 1st Floor,
14th Cross, 2nd Block,
Jayanagar, BANGALORE-560 011. ...DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs.7,06,975.10/- (Rupees Seven Lakhs Six Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Five and Paisa Ten Only)** apart from future interest of 24% p.a. in O.S. No. 25191/2023 and same is pending adjudication in CCH 20, Before Addl. City Civil Court, MayoHall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the 30th day of May, 2024 at 11:00 A.M. to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the 22nd day of March,2024.

By the order of court
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & CO.,
ADVOCATES,
New No.9, Old No.11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF CITY CIVIL AND SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH 20)
O.S. NO.25825/2022

BETWEEN:
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore-560001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Mr. Pramod G.
Aged about 45 years
S/o Mr. Gurumallappa
...PLAINTIFF

AND:
1. MR. SOMBIR SINGH,
S/o Sultan Singh,
No. 40/41, Shivashakthi Nilaya, Teacher Colony, Chikkabidrakallu, Nagasandra Post, Tumkur Road, Nr, Parle Factory Bangalore-560073
...DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 5,47,177.74/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Forty Seven Thousand One Hundred Seventy Seven paisa Seventy Four Only)** apart from future interest of 09.75% p.a., in O.S. No. 25825/2022 and same is pending adjudication in CCH 20, Before Mayo Hall, Bengaluru. Addl., City Civil Court Mayo Hall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **23rd day of April 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Ex-parte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the 22nd March, 2024.

By the order of court
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & CO.,
ADVOCATES,
New No. 99, Old No.11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE XI ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-8)
O.S No. 4342/2022
Hg 13/06/2024

BETWEEN :
M/s ICICI Bank Limited,
Having its registered office at : Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara-390 007. Having its head office and Zonal office at : 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru-560068 and also having branch at M.G. Road, Bengaluru, through its Authorized representative Mr. Rohith Ali M....PLAINTIFF

AND :
Sri. Lakshmi Sagar and another, ...DEFENDANTS

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT NO 1 & 2 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC

Defendant :
1) Lakshmi Sagar H,
S/o. Hosoorappa,
Aged about 34 Years,
Residing at No. 9-84/C, Second Floor, 4th Cross, Srinivasa Temple Road, Maruthi nagar, Madiwala, Bengaluru-560068.
2) Lakshmi Kanth H.
S/o. Hosoorappa,
Aged about 35 Years,
Residing at No.9-84/c, Second Floor, 4th cross, Srinivasa Temple Road, Maruthi nagar, Madiwala, Bengaluru-560068.

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 3,56,890/-** along with interest at the rate of 15% P.A. against you, and you are summoned to appear before the XI Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H -8), in person or by a pleader, on the day of **13.06.2024** at **11:00 AM** to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 19th day of mach 2024 at Bangalore.

By order of the Court
Assistant Registrar,
Hon'nle City Civil Court,
Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar, Vidhii Partners, Advocates,
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A', 3, Queens Road,
Bengaluru- 01.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-20)
O.S. No. 25655/2023

BETWEEN:
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Mansi Singh
D/o. Mr. Anil Kumar Singh
Aged about 24 years,
fxcol@yahoo.co.in
Phone No. 8041216669.
...PLAINTIFF

AND :
Mr. CHRISTOPHER SHANKAR,
S/o Mr. Stephen Sreedhar,
Aged 41 years,
10/1, 18th B Cross
Lakshmi Puram, Ulsoor
BANGALORE-560 008.
....DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 8,36,075/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Thirty Six Thousand and Hundred Seventy Five Only)** apart from future interest of 18% p.a., in O.S. No. 25655/2023 and same is pending adjudication in CCH 20, Before Addl. City Civil Court Mayo Hall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the 19th day of April, 2024 at 11:00 A.M. to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the 22nd day of March, 2024.

By the order of court
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & CO.,
ADVOCATES,
New No. 9, Old No.11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005.

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, AT BENGALURU
4th Floor, Telephone House Building, Raja Bhavan Road, Bengaluru- 560 001
IN THE MATTER OF
O. A No. 1081/2023

Between
ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
Versus
Mr. KC Nagasanthosh and another ...Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANT No.1 AND 2 UNDER RULE 23 (VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY PAPER PUBLICATION

DEFENDANTS No.1 and 2:
1. KC Nagasanthosh
Son of Kushalnagar Jejanan Shetty, Aged about 46 years, Residing at 62, 1st Floor, 1st Main, 4th Cross, LIL Colony, 3rd Block, East Jayanagar, Near Nandini Dairy, Bangalore- 560 011
PAN No. AHYPN2097D.
PH: 9620095926.
2. Smt. Nagashree K S
W/o KC Nagasanthosh, Aged about 45 years, Residing at Belaguru Village and Post, Hosadurga Tq. Chithradurga District Bangalore- 573 114, PAN No. AQWPN9610P

WHEREAS the Applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act,1993 against you for recovery of a sum of Rs.37,18,199.82/- (Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakhs Eighteen Thousand One hundred Ninety-Nine and Eighty-Two Paise Only) together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.

You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication of this summons or on **31/07/2024** at **11:00 AM** in person or by pleader /Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this 21st day of March, 2024.

By order of the Tribunal Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Bengaluru

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Study unravels the recipe that gives Kashmiri rice variety unique aroma

Aromatic rice has great value worldwide for its potential to enhance dining experiences and appeal to the health-conscious. SKUAST researchers said mushk budiji's export potential could be maximised by cultivating it in places where the environment causes its flavour to be expressed the most

Hirra Azmat

Undehusked mushk budiji rice. HIRRA AZMAT/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Kashmir Himalayas are known for the cultivation of mushk budiji, an indigenous rice variety distinguished by its rich aroma and unique taste. Recently, scientists at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Srinagar, reported that altitude and temperature play an important role in the development of this aroma.

In a study recently published in *Nature Scientific Reports*, they have reported identifying around 35 aromatic compounds in the variety at altitudes between 5,000 and 7,000 feet across the valley.

Mushk budiji was on the verge of extinction for some time due to various factors. Chief among them was the prevalence of rice blast disease, its low yield, and lack of profitability. But a revival programme launched in 2007 by SKUAST scientists saw the crop make a slow comeback.

Gaurav Zinta, senior scientist at the CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, said the study "serves as a foundational work to understand the intricate relationship between altitude and aroma development in an indigenous rice variety." He wasn't involved in the study.

GC-MS and e-nose

"Surprisingly, there hasn't been any comprehensive study conducted to determine the most suitable locations for the cultivation of mushk budiji," Syed Zameer Hussain, professor and head of the Division of Food Science and Technology, SKUAST and corresponding author of the study, said. "Motivated by this gap in knowledge, we decided to conduct a study of selected locations on the flavour profile of mushk budiji using gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy (GC-MS) and an 'electronic nose'."

These locations spanned Kupwara near the region's northern edge to Khudwani in Anantnag in the south.

GC-MS is an analytical method used to reveal the presence of volatile compounds present in organic mixtures extracted from geological, environmental, and biological samples. The e-nose is a tool fit with various sensors as well as an artificial intelligence (AI) component; it assessed the flavour attributes of rice samples.

Based on these studies, the scientists identified 35 volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in mushk budiji rice samples. Of these, the concentration of aldehydes (molecules containing the functional group -CH=O) ranged from 6.33% to 29.09% and alcohols (-OH) from 0.47% to 30.34%.According to Ufaq Fayaz, the lead author of the study and research scholar at SKUAST, 2-acetyl-1-pyrroline (2-AP) is a known aromatic compound found in some varieties - but it was present only in mushk budiji samples collected from higher altitudes, particularly in the districts of Budgam and Kupwara.

Dr. Hussain also said 2-AP wasn't the only compound that contributed to mushk budiji's distinct aroma. The team found this through the e-nose analysis of samples from locations that lacked the presence of 2-AP. This, according to him, is "contrary to common perception".

A genetic component

The team also used "gene-expression analysis to understand the influence of various environmental factors across the eight locations," Dr. Fayaz said.

This analysis is a crucial tool for scientists to understand how genes work. It involves studying which genes are active and producing proteins in a given cell or tissue at a specific time. After the rice panicles from all the selected locations were collected, the researchers isolated RNA from each sample using standard lab protocols. (RNA is a molecule that carries genetic information from DNA and which a cell uses to make proteins.)

The researchers converted the RNA to a form more amenable to analysis. Finally, using the real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) process, they amplified the presence of different bits of RNA pertaining to the sets of candidate genes responsible for degrading fatty acids and metabolising linoleic acid and ether lipids. In this way, the researchers were able to identify which genes were turned 'on' or 'off' and how much of each gene's RNA was present.

Dr. Fayaz added that the results from the gene-expression analysis matched those from the GC-MS and e-nose analyses - indicating that the environment guides mushk budiji's flavour profile through its genes.

Advantage for farmers

Dr. Zinta said aromatic rice has considerable value worldwide for its distinct flavour, fragrance, and quality, its potential to enhance dining experiences, and its appeal to health-conscious consumers.

To this, the SKUAST researchers said mushk budiji's export potential could be maximised by cultivating it in places where the environmental conditions cause the variety's flavour compounds to be expressed the most.

Together with "innovative packaging" to "improve the appeal of these rice varieties in the international market", their findings could "pave the way for significant economic growth in the agricultural sector," Dr. Hussain said.

> Mushk budiji was on the verge of extinction owing to the prevalence of rice blast disease, its low yield, and lack of profitability. But a programme launched in 2007 by SKUAST scientists saw the crop make a slow comeback

Nonetheless, he also flagged the need for more studies - including the need to understand the mechanisms that drive heightened gene expression in certain locations.

'An important step'

Dr. Zinta also said that while the study offers valuable insights into the flavour profile of mushk budiji rice and its correlation with altitude, it has limitations as well. One lies in the limited scope of the study: it focused solely on altitude as a factor influencing aroma development, whereas other environmental variables such as soil type and climatic conditions were considered but not extensively explored.

Additionally, although the study identified the over-expression of specific genes to be associated with the synthesis of the aroma at higher altitudes, he echoed Dr. Hussain to say the exact mechanisms linking altitude and gene expression remain to be fully elucidated. "So most of the outcomes of the work are based on correlation rather than causation."

He also said that the GC-MS and e-nose techniques - which the researchers used to profile the rice variety's flavour - may not capture the entire spectrum of VOCs that are responsible for the aroma.

Even so, Dr. Zinta continued, "the study represents an important step towards understanding the complex interplay between environmental factors and genetic mechanisms in shaping the aroma of aromatic rice varieties like mushk budiji."

'Gene expression on global scale'

Wajid Waheed Bhat, an assistant professor and the DBT-Ramalingaswami fellow at the division of Basic Sciences and Humanities in SKUAST-Kashmir, also said the authors have examined the expression of certain genetic pathways related to the biosynthesis of lipids (fat molecules) and their degradation, and tried to correlate these findings with the rest of the metabolomic and altitudinal VOC data.

According to him, this was a much-needed first step towards understanding the biosynthesis and regulation of VOCs in mushk budiji.

"This also serves as the basis for selecting the best location with respect to altitude and climatic conditions for growing this endemic rice variety in Kashmir," Dr. Bhat said.

"However, the study would have vastly benefited by studying gene expression on a more global scale, via whole-sample transcriptome sequencing," he added.

In whole-sample transcriptome sequencing, the entire set of RNA molecules present in a sample is captured for analysis, allowing researchers to identify all active genes and their expression levels.

Performing this sequencing, according to Dr. Bhat, would have provided "a much larger picture of the genetic actors involved in this intricate network of gene regulation vis-à-vis VOC biosynthesis, and the effect of external abiotic and biotic factors."

(Hirra Azmat is a Kashmir-based journalist who writes extensively on health and environment. Her stories have appeared in various local and national publications.)

A kangaroo near White Cliffs, an Outback area in the state of New South Wales, Australi . AFP

Is Australia's carbon credit scheme a 'catastrophe'?

Agence France-Presse

Australia's carbon credit scheme was undermined by damning new research on March 27, which found a world-leading reforestation project had been an underperforming "catastrophe".

Vast swathes of land across Australia's desert Outback have been earmarked for native forest regeneration meant to offset emissions as new trees suck up carbon.

But researchers have found that across almost 80% of these plantations forest growth was either stagnant or that woodlands were shrinking.

Despite this, Australia had used these projects to bank millions of tonnes in questionable carbon credits, scientists said, which are used to supposedly offset polluting industries.

"I think it can only be described, and I'm using generous words here, as a gross failure," lead author Andrew Macintosh told AFP.

Australia has set aside almost 42 million hectares under the scheme, an area larger than the landmass of Japan. Researchers said it was "one of the world's largest" natural carbon offset projects.

Officials claim that since 2013, the native forest spreading across this land has sucked up more than 27 million tonnes of carbon.

But the peer-reviewed study, which used satellite imagery to chart forest growth, has cast serious doubt on this figure.

Despite its growing vulnerability to climate-linked natural disasters, Australia remains one of the world's biggest exporters of gas and thermal coal

"They should be showing really strong increases in tree cover," said Dr. Macintosh, a former chair of the government body responsible for tracking Australia's carbon offsets. "And it's not there, we're not seeing it."

Each tonne of carbon sequestered by these forests is chalked up as a single carbon credit. These credits are then bought by mining companies, airlines, and other heavily polluting industries to offset their emissions.

Dr. Macintosh said Australia was, in essence, selling carbon credits that didn't exist.

Australia's Clean Energy Regulator said "a number of reviews have confirmed the integrity" of these carbon offsets.

The regulator said it "only issues carbon credits where a project can demonstrate regenerating native forest".

Australian Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen said the assumptions underpinning the scheme remained "basically sound".

Climate policy has long been a fraught affair in Australia, set back by a decade of political brawling dubbed the "climate wars".

Despite its growing vulnerability to climate-linked natural disasters, Australia remains one of the world's biggest exporters of gas and thermal coal.

The peer-reviewed research was published in the *Nature Communications journal, Earth & Environment*.

Australia has committed to cutting carbon emissions by 43% by 2030 from 2005 levels, on a path to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Australia's carbon dioxide emissions per person are among the highest in the world at 15.3 tonnes, surpassing U.S. levels, World Bank figures show.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Security features of rupee notes

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

In 2000, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) incorporated a feature in the then 500- and 1,000-rupee notes. On the obverse of each note, the note's numerical value was printed such that, when the note was flat, the numbers were green but blue when observed from an angle. Name the ink used to print this feature.

QUESTION 2

On many currency notes, including the new rupee notes the RBI released in 2016, some designs are printed such that they rise a little over the rest of the note's surface. Such printing is called _____ printing, from the Italian word for 'carving'. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 3

This feature appears between the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi and a vertical band. On notes of the 5- and 10-rupee denominations, it contains the word 'RBI' in small letters, and in the notes of higher value it also includes the value of each note. Name this feature.

QUESTION 4

From 2000, the RBI has weaved a narrow strip of ribbon across the note's breadth, engraved with the words "Bharat" and "RBI". It is visible on the obverse and hidden on the reverse. Name this feature.

QUESTION 5

At least until the previous series of banknotes, the RBI printed a rectangular image on the obverse side of the 20-, 50-, 100-, 500-, and 1,000-rupee bank notes, to the right of the Gandhi portrait. This image showed the note's value in numbers and could only be seen only when one held the note in which way?

Answers to March 26 quiz:

1. Bright spot in the middle of a shadow of a circular object – **Ans: Arago spot**

2. 1887 experiment to look for the 'medium' through which waves pass – **Ans: Michelson-Morney experiment**

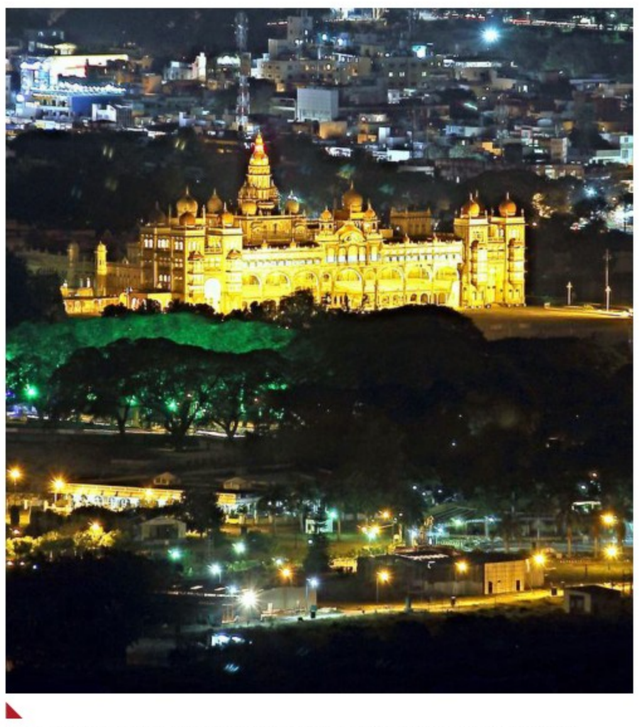
3. French mathematician who combined space and time into spacetime in 1898 – **Ans: Henri Poincare**

4. Name for each point in spacetime – **Ans: Event**

5. Mathematical character of spacetime determined by its local and global properties – **Ans: Manifold**

Visual: **A.K. Raychaudhuri**

First contact: K.N. Viswanathan | Yogapriya K. | Muhammed Shahid Suri



Visual: The Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran operates two currency printing presses. One is in Salboni, West Bengal. The other is in the city shown above. Name it.

For feedback and suggestions
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Teachers ask for more time to evaluate 1.66 cr. answer sheets

Board exam for class 5 was completed on Tuesday, and they will end on Thursday for classes 8 and 9; KSEAB issued an order to complete the evaluation of answer sheets of class 5 students by March 31, and the rest by April 2

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

After a Division Bench of the High Court of Karnataka gave the green signal, the KSEAB resumed the stalled board exams on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Teachers are up in arms against an order issued by the Karnataka State Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB), which has allotted less than a week for the evaluation of around 1.66 crore answer sheets of classes 5, 8, and 9 board examination (Summative Assessment-2).

After a Division Bench of the High Court of Karnataka gave the green signal, the KSEAB resumed the stalled board exams on Monday.

The examination for Class 5 was completed on Tuesday, and the examination for classes 8 and 9 will end on Thursday.

The KSEAB issued an order to complete the evaluation of answer sheets of Class 5 students by March 31, and the rest by April 2. The KSEAB has decided to announce the board exam results of classes 5, 8, and 9 by April 10,

The major reason for the opposition to this order is that the KSEAB has suggested that a teacher evaluate an average of 40 to 80 answer sheets every day.

"The evaluation of Class 10 exam answer sheets has been conducted for at least 20 days. Also, the KSEAB allows a teacher to evaluate an average of 15 to 20 answer papers in a day. Why is there a different yardstick for evaluation of answer papers of Class 5, 8, and 9?" said a teacher.

It has been decided to conduct inter-cluster-wise evaluation of answer sheets at the taluk centre. Later, the written exam and internal assessment scores of the students will be aggregated and converted into grades, and entered in the Student Achievement Tracking System (SATS) portal. Then, the results will be declared by the respective school principals on April 10.

While each evaluator of class 5 has been instructed to evaluate 80 answer sheets per day, each evaluator of Class 8 has been told to evaluate 60 answer sheets each day, and each evaluator of class 9 has been given a target of 40 answer sheets per day.

This time, around 28 lakh students have appeared for the board exams of Class 5, 8, and 9.

1.66 crore papers

Examinations are being conducted for four subjects for class 5 and for seven subjects each, including Physical Education, for Class 8 and 9. Putting all these answer sheets together, around 1.66 crore answer papers have to be evaluated.

"Teachers have recently completed the annual exams of Class 1 to 4 and 6, and are engrossed in the evaluation. And, the class 10 exams will be held till April 6. Almost all high school teachers have been deputed for the examination duty. In addition, many teachers are deputed for Lok Sabha election duties. There is a shortage of teachers for examination work, and teachers are working under a lot of pressure. In such a situation, it is inhumane to order completion of the evaluation of the answer sheets of classes 5, 8, and 9 in just four days. The board should extend the period for evaluation and change the date for declaration of results for classes 5, 8, and 9," another government high school teacher demanded.

Gopalakrishna H.N., Director, KSEAB, told *The Hindu:* "Most of teachers have been deputed for election work and class 10 examinations. The answer sheets should be evaluated as soon as the Class 10 exams are over. Along with this, teachers also have other office work. With all this work on their hands, we suggested completing the evaluation of class 5, 8 and 9 board exam answer papers by April 2. Also, since the pages of answer sheets of these classes are less, we have fixed a shorter period for evaluation. However, we have received objections from teachers that the time given for evaluation is not enough. Appropriate action will be taken to extend the time after discussing this with the higher authorities."

Lokayukta raids across State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Lokayukta police on Wednesday conducted search operations across the State in connection with 13 disproportionate asset cases registered against 13 government officers in the Lokayukta police stations of Bengaluru city, Udupi, Karwar, Mandya, Mysuru, Kodagu, Dharwad, Bidar, Kolar, Vijayapura, Chickballapur, and Belagavi.

They unearthed disproportionate assets worth ₹35.8 crore.

Over 20 teams of officials carried out simultaneous searches at the offices and residences of the relatives of the officers.

The officials said that the value of the seized properties could go up.

According to the official release, the following officials were raided: Ranganath S.P, Chief Engineer, BBMP, Yelahanka Zone, Byatarayanapura, Bengaluru; Krishne Gowda, Second Division Account Assistant, Agasanapura Gram Panchayat, Malavalli, Mandya district; M.M. Fayaz Ahamed, Assistant Engineer, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, Somwarpet Taluk Panchayat, Kodagu; B.V. Jayanna, Executive Officer, Somwarpet Taluk Panchayat, Kodagu; Yathish, Panchayat Development Officer, Manchanayakanahalli Gram Panchayat, Bidadi hobli, Ramanagara taluk, Ramanagara district; Sadashivaiah, Executive Engineer, KRIDL, Chickballapur district; Prakash, Junior Engineer, Karwar; Roopa M., DC, Excise, Udupi district; Sadashiva Jayappa Karagar, Grade-1 Secretary, in charge PDO, Nidagundi Gram Panchayat, Raibag taluk, Belagavi district; Mahesh Chandraiah Hiremath, Range Forest Officer, Seeds Development Unit, Dharwad district; Shanmukappa Bishma Teertha, ARTO, Jamkhandi, Bagalkot district; Shivakumaraswamy, Executive Engineer, Karanja Project, Bhalki, Bidar district; Nagarajappa, Assistant Director, Town Planning, Magadi Yojana Pradikara, Magadi taluk, Ramanagara.

Hospitals directed to ensure fire safety and prevent accidents during summer

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Hospitals have been asked to conduct electrical audits bi-annually to evaluate the hospital's power consumption, particularly in high-demand areas like ICUs. FILE PHOTO

Following a letter by the Centre to all States on fire safety guidelines that need to be followed by hospitals during the summer, the State Health Department has directed all healthcare facilities to ensure all fire safety measures are in place.

In a recent circular, Health Commissioner Randeep D. has directed all healthcare facilities to ensure all safety guidelines are followed as the threat of fire incidents is high during the summer.

In his letter to Chief Secretaries of all States, Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra has requested them to direct the State Health Departments and the State Disaster Management Authorities to work in close collaboration to ensure that all hospitals conduct comprehensive

This directive comes after a letter by the Centre to States on fire safety norms that need to be followed during the summer

fire safety and electrical load audits apart from fire NOC compliance.

A detailed set of instructions outlining the steps and measures to be undertaken by hospitals to ensure fire safety compliance has been enclosed with the letter.

Following this, the Health Commissioner has directed all hospitals, including primary health centres, medical college hospitals as well as private hospitals, to regularly inspect fire-fighting equipment such as fire extinguishers, hydrants, and alarms.

The hospitals have been asked to establish a maintenance schedule for all fire safety equipment and conduct electrical audits bi-annually to evaluate the hospital's power consumption, particularly in high-demand areas like ICUs.

Oxygen safety

"In areas with oxygen tanks or piped oxygen, strict no-smoking policies and controls on heat sources should be implemented. Signage should clearly mark these areas, and staff should be trained on the risks associated with high- oxygen environments. Besides, fire smoke detectors and fire alarms should be installed in all hospital areas, particularly in patient rooms, hallways, and common areas," the circular added.

Health Minister writes to Centre seeking urgent supply of DSTB drugs

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka notifies more than 80,000 patients annually and around 6,800 TB patients on a monthly basis.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has written to the Centre seeking supply of drug-sensitive Tuberculosis (DSTB) drugs on an urgent basis to Karnataka. This follows the Centre's latest communication asking the State to procure drugs locally for the next three months. As the communication has been made after the model code of conduct (MCC) came into force, the State is finding it hard to procure the required quantity of drugs, the Minister said.

In a letter to the Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Mr. Rao has pointed out the frequent interruption in the supply of anti-TB drugs to Karnataka is affecting thousands of TB patients ."While there has been frequent interruption in the supply of anti-TB drugs to Karnataka since 2021, recently, Karnataka has received two communications from the Centre asking the State to procure DSTB drugs for the next three months . The second communication has been made after the model code of conduct came into effect," he said in the letter.

Karnataka notifies more than 80,000 patients annually and around 6,800 TB patients on a monthly basis. As these patients need to be provided continuous treatment, the State has intensified its efforts to procure anti-TB drugs both at the State and the district level. A letter from Mission Director, National Health Mission, has also been sent to the Union Joint Secretary (RCH) regarding permission for utilising the approved Record of Proceedings (ROP) of 2024-2025 to procure these medications..

The Health Department has requested the Finance Department to provide additional funds for procuring the drugs, he said.

"However, neither these medications are available in the quantities required by the State nor the procurement process can be hastened in view of both its manufacturing process as well as the prevailing MCC. While I do not wish to accuse the Union government of callousness, I have to point out that State support for the TB patients has been jeopardised by this action of the Centre. Both the delayed communication to procure a critical drug (whose procurement is problematic in the short run) and also issuing the communication during MCC have adversely affected the efforts of the State government in this regard. Under these circumstances, the Union government has an obligation to respond immediately and support the State to keep up the supply of critical drugs to the TB patients at a required level," he said.

Gang arrested for killing three men in dispute over treasure

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Tumakuru police have said that they have cracked a triple murder case and arrested a gang of eight persons, including the prime accused Patharaju alias Rajaguru Kumar, 35, a self-proclaimed priest of Sira Gate, on the charge of murdering three people from Belthangady taluk in a row over treasure.

The deceased were identified as Ishaq Simam, 54, Shahul Hameed, 45, and Siddique Abdul Khadar, 34.

According to the police, they had contacted Patharaju and paid him ₹6 lakh after he promised to get access to the hidden treasure through his source.

The accused then began to avoid the trio even after many deadlines, following which the trio threatened to file a complaint with the police.

The accused allegedly roped in a gang of college dropouts and unemployed youth in his area, offering them three kilos of gold and called the trio to come and get the treasure. The trio borrowed their friend's car and reached Beeranakallu, coming under Kora police station limits, where the accused, armed with weapons, waited for them. As soon as the trio reached the spot, the accused attacked and hacked them to death, and carried the bodies in their car to the Kuchangi lakebed area and set the car on fire, said the police.

The accused, Gangaraju, 35, Madhusudhan, 24, Naveen, 24, Krishna, 22, Ganesh, 19, Kiran, 23, and Simon, 18, were charged with murder and destruction of evidence. The police are investigating to ascertain Patharaju's criminal background.

IISc. team explores new ways for sustainable construction

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The IISc. team has also developed 3D-printable materials made of excavated soil stabilised with a combination of binders.

In order to address the issues of dwindling resources of natural sand and the increase in carbon dioxide emissions, especially from manufacturing cement or fired clay bricks, researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) are exploring ways to store carbon dioxide from industrial flue gas in excavated soil and construction and demolition (C&D) waste.

According to the IISc., the construction sector today faces several challenges.

It said that natural sand is fast becoming a scarce resource and that it might run out of supply by 2050.

Carbon dioxide emissions, especially from manufacturing cement or fired clay bricks, are increasing every year.

The amount of C&D waste is on the rise - about 150 million tonnes are generated annually in India and the recycling rate is only about 1%.

To address such challenges, researchers at the IISc.'s Centre for Sustainable Technologies (CST) are exploring ways to store carbon dioxide from industrial flue gas in excavated soil and C&D waste.

"CO_2 utilisation and sequestration can be a scalable and feasible technology for manufacturing low-carbon prefabricated building products, while being aligned with the nation's decarbonisation targets," said Souradeep Gupta, Assistant Professor at CST.

Mr. Gupta's team has shown that replacing natural sand with carbon dioxide-treated C&D waste in mortar and then curing it in a controlled, CO_2-rich environment can speed up the development of the material's engineering properties, and enhance its compressive strength by 20-22%.

His lab has also tested the effect of injecting carbon dioxide gas into clayey soil - typically excavated from construction sites. This resulted in better stabilisation of clay by cement and lime, and reduced the surface area, pore volume, and lime reactivity of clay in soil, thereby improving the bulk engineering performance of the material.

The team has also developed 3D-printable materials made of excavated soil stabilised with a combination of binders like Portland cement, blast furnace slag (a granular calcium-silicate byproduct), and fly ash.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Bills passed the same day they were introduced in LS: ADR

45 A total of 222 bills were passed in the 17th Lok Sabha (LS) of which, more than 40 were cleared the same day they were introduced in the House, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). PTI

Amount released by India for Bhutan's development

500 in ₹ crore. India released the second tranche to Bhutan for the development of infrastructure related to the GyalSung Project. PM Modi assured ₹10,000 crore support over five years. PTI

The NTPC signs pact for loan with Japanese agency

200 in $ million loan. The state-owned power giant NTPC said it has inked a pact with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for sourcing the loan. PTI

Pakistani personal data was comprised over five years

2.7 in million. In a serious data breach, the personal information of millions of Pakistani citizens was compromised from the National Database and Registration Authority from 2019 to 2023. PTI

The number of people to face chronic hunger in 2022

783 in million. The UNEP's Food Waste Index Report explains that the world wasted an estimated 19% of food produced globally in 2022. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On sustainable building materials

Why is addressing energy inefficiency in residential buildings important? What is Residential Envelope Transmittance Value? Why are Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks the optimal building material with respect to embodied energy and construction time?

EXPLAINER

Satish Kumar
Stuti Goyal
Dharini Sridharan

The story so far:
India is witnessing an unprecedented construction boom, with over 3,00,000 housing units erected annually. This growth brings economic opportunities and improved living standards but also poses significant environmental challenges. The building sector, a major energy consumer, accounts for over 33% of India's electricity usage, contributing to environmental degradation and climate change. The India Cooling Action Plan forecasts an eight-fold increase in cooling demand between 2017 and 2037, emphasising the need for thermal comfort while reducing active cooling demand.

How can the construction sector become energy efficient?
Addressing energy inefficiency in residential buildings is crucial, given India's rising energy and cooling demand due to economic growth, urbanisation, heat islands, and climate change. Initiatives like the Eco-Niwas Samhita (ENS) and the Residential Energy Conservation Building Code are steps in the right direction. The ENS introduces the Residential Envelope Transmittance Value (RETV), a metric measuring heat transfer through a building's envelope. Lower RETV values lead to cooler indoor environments and decreased energy usage. For optimal efficiency, improved occupant comfort, and lower utility expenses, it's recommended to maintain an RETV of 15W/m2 or less. However, current construction trends favour fast-paced, energy-intensive techniques with active cooling strategies, leading to compromises in thermal comfort. There needs to be more widespread knowledge about climate-appropriate design and architecture, with perceptions of high first costs as a barrier to the design and construction of climate-responsive buildings needing to change.

Reduce energy: Workers at a construction site in Mumbai on March 1. AFP

What materials are optimal?
Our analysis across four warmer climate cities in India highlighted the popularity of materials like Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks, red bricks, fly ash, and monolithic concrete (Mivan). Despite concerns about sustainability, monolithic concrete construction was favoured by building developers for its speed, strength, quality, and scalability, with over 60% of buildings under design and construction phases opting for it, especially in high-rise buildings and skyscrapers.

The RETV evaluation for these buildings revealed that AAC blocks consistently had the lowest RETV across all climatic conditions, indicating their potential as a thermally efficient material. Based on literature review, a comparison of building materials for a 100 sq. ft wall area displayed substantial differences in embodied energy (the energy associated with the manufacturing of a product), with monolithic concrete having an embodied energy 75 times greater than AAC. When considering the estimated construction time for a 100 sq. ft room, red bricks required the longest time, while Mivan construction required the least. Mivan technology offered faster construction of buildings compared to traditional masonry work, particularly for taller structures.

Measuring materials

An analysis of different building materials through different parameters

	AAC**	Red brick	Monolithic concrete
RETV**	10 W/m2	16 W/m2	22 W/m2
Construction time (100 sq.ft. room)	10-13 days	11-14 days	10-12 days
Embodied energy (100 sq.ft. wall)	187 MJ	1,755 MJ	1,41,510 MJ

values are indicative in nature. |Residential Envelope Transmittance Value. Autoclaved Aerated Concrete*

Sustainability concerns are prominent across all materials. Red bricks exhibit moderate embodied energy, contributing to resource depletion, emissions, and waste. While AAC blocks have lower embodied energy, they still contribute to emissions and waste. Monolithic concrete, despite its quick construction time, presents the highest embodied energy, significant environmental impact, and sustainability challenges. Hence, AAC blocks offer a better balance between embodied energy and construction time than red bricks and monolithic concrete.

What next?
India has significant untapped potential for innovative building materials. Interdisciplinary collaborations with sustainability experts to delve deeper into integrated design and optimise strategies like building orientation, Window Wall Ratio (WWR), U-value (rate of heat transfer) of walls, roofs and window assemblies, glazing performance, active cooling systems, etc., can unlock the potential for a sustainable built environment. The construction industry's preference for Mivan as a prime building material raises sustainability concerns, including high embodied carbon and thermal discomfort. Sustainable construction requires innovation from building materials manufacturers to develop cost-effective, scalable, durable, fire-resistant solutions with superior thermal performance and climate resilience. In conclusion, the journey toward sustainable construction is challenging but essential for a greener future. By re-imagining construction design and practices, manufacturing innovative walling materials, and fostering a culture of sustainability, we can create resilient and energy-efficient structures that align with environmental goals and significantly improve the quality of life for the masses.

Satish Kumar is President and Executive Director, AEEE. Stuti Goyal is Research Associate, AEEE and Dharini Sridharan is Senior Research Associate, AEEE.

THE GIST

- Addressing energy inefficiency in residential buildings is crucial, given India's rising energy and cooling demand due to economic growth, urbanisation, heat islands, and climate change.
- Red bricks exhibit moderate embodied energy, contributing to resource depletion, emissions, and waste. While AAC blocks have lower embodied energy, they still contribute to emissions and waste. Monolithic concrete, despite its quick construction time, presents the highest embodied energy, significant environmental impact, and sustainability challenges.
- India has significant untapped potential for innovative building materials.

Why are Rohingya refugees risking their lives at sea?

Which are the countries that are currently seeing an influx of Rohingya refugees?

Sumeda

The story so far:
The dramatic rescue of dozens of Rohingya refugees from the Indian Ocean last week after a wooden boat capsized off the Indonesian coast has once again drawn attention to the plight of the refugees who are increasingly embarking on dangerous sea journeys to seek a better life. As per the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 4,500 Rohingya refugees set off on dangerous journeys across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea last year. Of these, 569 people lost their lives or went missing, marking the highest death toll since 2014.

Who are the Rohingya refugees?
The Rohingya are a Muslim minority ethnic group with their roots in the Arakan kingdom in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. The Rohingya are culturally and religiously distinct from the majority Buddhist population in Myanmar. The Rohingya claim to have lived in Myanmar's Rakhine State for generations, but successive governments in the country have disputed their ties, labelling them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Myanmar has refused to recognise them, denying them citizenship since 1982, thus making them the world's largest stateless population devoid of fundamental rights and security.

Their largest exodus began in August 2017 when a massive wave of violence broke out in Rakhine, driving more than 7.5 lakh people to seek sanctuary in Bangladesh to escape the brutality of security forces. Entire villages were razed, families were torn apart, and severe human rights violations were reported. The United Nations has described the 2017 violence as "ethnic cleansing". A 2018 UN fact-finding commission claimed the Myanmar government had "genocidal" intent against the Rohingya.

Why sea journeys?
While over one million Rohingya have fled Myanmar since the 1990s, around six lakh remain in the country, mostly in camps for internally displaced people where their movements and livelihoods are restricted. An estimated 9,60,000 Rohingya, meanwhile, reside in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Most live near the Myanmar border in the Cox's Bazar, which has grown over the years to house some of the world's largest and most densely populated refugee camps. These overcrowded camps lack basic human necessities, forcing the Rohingya to live in harsh conditions. There is a shortage of food, access to water is inadequate, sanitation facilities are missing, healthcare is insufficient, and children are growing up without formal education.

Security conditions also have deteriorated over the years due to gang violence and an increase in arson attacks in camps. Over 60 Rohingya were killed in Bangladeshi camp clashes in 2023. With the option of returning to Myanmar virtually impossible, and worsening conditions in relief camps in Bangladesh, an increasing number of Rohingya have been undertaking dangerous journeys across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea to Muslim-majority nations of Indonesia and Malaysia. However, human traffickers exploit their desperation, charging exorbitant amounts to ferry them on rickety boats from Bangladesh to Indonesia. The treacherous voyages with inadequate space and in the absence of basic supplies take weeks and sometimes stretch into months. Horrifying accounts of abuse during the journey, including violence against women, have been recorded. Many do not survive the journey.

What about the rising death toll?
The UN estimates that one in eight Rohingya who take the sea route die or disappear in the attempt, making the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal among the deadliest stretches of water in the world. Last year, the number of people embarking on sea journeys increased by 21%. The UNHCR reported a 63% increase in deaths or disappearances compared to 2022. The report also highlighted the significant spike in the number of Rohingya arriving in Indonesia via sea in recent years. The number of Rohingya refugees that arrived in Indonesia increased by 1,261% between 2021 and 2023. While 64% of the refugee boats docked in Indonesia last year, compared to 22% in 2022, only one boat carrying 83 individuals reached Malaysia, according to UNHCR data.

THE GIST

- The Rohingya are a Muslim minority ethnic group with their roots in the Arakan kingdom in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. The Rohingya are culturally and religiously distinct from the majority Buddhist population in Myanmar.
- Myanmar has refused to recognise the Rohingya denying them citizenship since 1982, thus making them the world's largest stateless population.
- With the option of returning to Myanmar virtually impossible, an increasing number of Rohingya have been undertaking dangerous journeys across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea to Muslim-majority nations of Indonesia and Malaysia.

Veerashaiva-Lingayat seers urge BJP to replace Joshi as candidate; Yediyurappa says nothing doing

Seers from various mutts meet in Hubballi to set a deadline for the BJP high command to find another candidate on the basis of what they say ill-treatment meted out to the community

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

In an intriguing development ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Veerashaiva-Lingayat seers from various mutts who met in Hubballi on Wednesday have set a deadline for the BJP high command to replace Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in Dharwad Lok Sabha Constituency on the basis of what they said ill-treatment meted out to the community and the seers.

And, in a quick reaction to the demand, the former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa has categorically denied any change in candidature in the constituency. He, however, said that he will speak to the seers to clear their misunderstanding.

Dingaleshwar Swami, along with Gurusiddeshwar Swami, Mallikarjun Swami and other seers, addressing a joint press conference in Hubballi on Wednesday. KIRAN BAKALE

Earlier in the day, scores of seers from Veerashaiva-Lingayat mutts from across the region led by Dingaleshwar Swami of Shirahatti Fakkireshwar Mutt held a meeting at Moorusavir Mutt in Hubballi in the presence of Gurusiddha Rajayogindra Swami which was chaired by Sri Mallikarjun Swami of Murugha Mutt.

The meeting reportedly discussed threadbare various socio political and religious issues concerning the community and the need for religious heads to plunge into electoral politics in the wake of ill-treatment of the community leaders and seers reportedly by Mr. Joshi.

Later, addressing pressperson along with various seers, Dingaleshwar Swami criticised Mr. Joshi and said that the Union Minister remembered the seers only during elections. Levelling a series of charges against Mr. Joshi, the seer listed out instances of ill-treatment of the seers by him and injustice caused to Lingayat leaders because of him, including Mr. Yediyurappa.

The seer said that the Veerashaiva-Lingayat seers will urge the BJP high command to change the party candidate for Dharwad Lok Sabha Constituency and nominate another candidate before Sunday. "If not, we will meet again on April 2 to decide on the next course of action," he said.

Dingaleshwar Swami also said that all the seers resolved to participate in the various elections in South India along with discussing various political developments and community's interest. He clarified that there was no discussion on fielding him from Dharwad constituency.

'Joshi doing good work'

Speaking on the development later in the evening, Mr. Yediyurappa categorically denied any change in the candidature of Mr. Joshi. "Mr. Joshi has been doing good work, taking people of all communities along with him. That's why Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given him various responsibilities and posts," he said.

Regarding the charge against Mr. Joshi by Dingaleshwar Swami and the meeting of the seers, he said that Veerashaiva-Lingayat seers have been with the party for long and any misunderstanding among the seers will be cleared.

Mr. Yediyurappa said that he will personally speak to the seers, particularly Dingaleshwar Swami, and try to clear the misunderstanding and convince them of the need to support Mr. Joshi.

Mr. Joshi, who was also present in the press conference, declined to reply to any of the personal charges against him but said that he has a lot of respect and devotion towards the seer and the Shirahatti Fakkireshwar Mutt. "I will take all his comments as his blessings," he said and added that he will also try to speak to the seer if he gave him time.

'Guarantees announced by Cong. in poll manifesto can't be termed corrupt practice by its candidate'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Observing that the five guarantee schemes announced by the Congress in its election manifesto cannot be termed as 'corrupt practices' as per the apex court's verdict on the promises made in election manifestos by political parties, the High Court of Karnataka has dismissed a petition challenging the election of Rizwan Arshad from Shivajinagar Assembly constituency in the elections held last year.

Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty passed the order while rejecting the petition filed by B. Lakshmidevi, a voter of Shivajinagar constituency in Bengaluru.

In the present petition, the High Court pointed out that the allegation of corrupt practice against Mr. Arshad was solely based on the election manifesto published by the Indian National Congress.

However, the High Court pointed out that the apex court, in its 2013 verdict in the case of S. Subramaniam Balaji vs State of Tamil Nadu, had held the assurance or the guarantees made in the election manifesto by political parties cannot be considered as corrupt practice under the Section 123 of the Representation of People Act, 1951.

For the purpose of Section 123 of the Act, the High Court said the promise or assurance should be made by the candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent.

The High Court also noted that the apex court, in S. Subramaniman Balaji's case, had ruled that Section 123 of the Act speaks about a candidate or his agent or any other person, and not about the political parties, and therefore, the promise made by a political party cannot constitute a corrupt practice by a candidate.

"In the absence of any material which would *prima facie* show that the five guarantees or promises published in the election manifesto by the Congress party, of which the respondent was a candidate in the assembly election, was published with the consent of the respondent or his election agent, the allegations cannot be termed to be corrupt practice for the purpose of the Act," the High Court observed.

Though the petitioner has contended that the election manifesto was published by the Congress Party with the consent of Mr. Arshad, the High Court pointed out that "there is no material placed before the court in support of such allegation".

Though the petitioner's advocate said that verdict in S. Subramaniman Balaji's case cannot be applied as the apex court itself had referred it to a larger Bench, the High Court said that it has to decide the matter on the basis of the law as it stands.

Lokayukta can't insist that govt. should entrust inquiry to it: HC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Lokayukta cannot insist that disciplinary inquiry against a government servant should be entrusted only to it while recommending disciplinary inquiry on the allegations against government servants in its report submitted to the government under provisions of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act, said the High Court of Karnataka.

The State government would be at liberty to apply its mind independently to the recommendation, to conduct a disciplinary inquiry against the government servant and take a decision as to whether the inquiry is required to be entrusted to the Lokayukta, the Upalokayukta or the Disciplinary Authority as contemplated under Rule 14-A of the Karnataka Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1957, the Court said.

Justice N.S. Sanjay Gowda passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by Yathish M.G., a senior environmental officer of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB).

The petitioner had questioned Lokayukta report recommending disciplinary inquiry against him in relation to a complaint and insisting that such inquiry should be entrusted to Lokayukta institution itself.

When Section 14-A of the CCA Rules empowers the government to entrust the disciplinary inquiry to the Lokayukta or the Upalokayukta or the Disciplinary Authority, the Lokayukta cannot be permitted to say that the inquiry should necessarily be entrusted to it, the court said.

However, the court refused to accept the petitioner's contention that government cannot order departmental inquiry against him as he is not a government servant but is an employee of the KSPCB and is governed by the regulations of the Board.

From Page One

Five Cong. legislators threaten to quit over candidate for Kolar seat

Mr. Narayanaswamy said he would decide on his move once the party decides on the Kolar ticket. It may be noted that the Congress is yet to announce its candidate for Kolar.

Party functionaries see today's political high drama as an ongoing political tussle between two factions of the Kolar Congress, one led by Mr. Muniyappa and another by former Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, vying for supremacy in the district.

However, the party leaders are viewing the legislators' threat to resign as "blackmail politics" against Mr. Muniyappa and his family.

The two MLCs displayed their resignation letters in front of journalists and met Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti. Minister Byrathi Suresh rushed to the Chairman's chamber and convinced them to not submit their resignations.

Mr. Horatti said MLCs had not submitted their resignations. "If they resign, I will accept it. But I cannot put pressure on them to resign," he said.

Mr. Suresh said he was directed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar and Mr. Kharge to set right the differences as the party had not announced the candidate yet.

Similarly, the three MLAs were planning to travel to Mangaluru to meet Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader to put in their papers, but later cancelled the trip as the latter himself said he was on his way to Bengaluru.

However, the legislators later said they had decided to wait following instructions from Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar.

Meanwhile, Mr. Muniyappa said he would abide by the party high command's decision on the candidate.

Other contenders for the ticket are Dalit leader M.C. Muniyappa and former Rajya Sabha member L. Hanumanthaiah.

The party has decided to nominate SC 'Right' candidates in Kalaburagi, Bijapur, and Chamarajanagar; and SC 'Left' candidates in Chitradurga and Kolar. In Kalaburagi, the ticket was given to Radhakrishna Doddamani, son-law-of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

Tejaswini Gowda resigns as MLC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former journalist Tejaswini Gowda resigned as Member of the Legislative Council on Wednesday.

This comes amidst reports that being upset over not being fielded in the Lok Sabha elections, Ms. Gowda may quit Bharatiya Janata Party and rejoin Congress. Ms. Gowda had been an aspirant for BJP ticket from either Mysuru or Bengaluru North constituencies and had even tried to lobby with the Congress for Mysuru ticket, sources said.

She is reportedly upset that the BJP did not field her in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Ms. Gowda was elected to the Council from the Assembly constituency from BJP in 2018. She defected from Congress and joined BJP in 2014 and was a prominent spokesperson for the party during her stint with the party.

Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti addressing a press conference confirmed her resignation and said he had accepted it. "She said she has resigned voluntarily, so I have accepted it. Her tenure was to end in June 2024," he said. Though Ms. Gowda has resigned as an MLC, she has remained silent and not announced her future plans. Despite multiple attempts by *The Hindu*, she was not available for comment.

Govind Karjol is BJP candidate for Chitradurga

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP has chosen former Deputy Chief Minister and Dalit leader Govind Karjol as its candidate from Chitradurga (SC Reserved) constituency for Lok Sabha polls.

The seat is presently being represented by Union Minister of State A. Narayanaswamy. The seat was witnessing resistance to the candidature of Mr. Karjol, who hails from Vijayapura/Bagalkot, ever since there were reports that he is eyeing this seat.

In fact, Mr. Narayanaswamy too is an outsider for this seat.

Mr. Karjol, a senior Dalit leader from BJP, is also a confidant of party veteran leader B.S. Yediyurappa.

With the announcement of candidate for the Chitradurga seat, the BJP has completed the process of naming candidates for all the 25 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka being contested by it.

The remaining three seats in Karnataka are being contested by BJP's alliance partner JD(S).

Filing of nominations for Lok Sabha elections to begin today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Filing of nominations for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls - the first phase in Karnataka - will begin on Thursday following the publication of the gazette notification by the Election Commission of India. In Karnataka, 14 parliamentary constituencies in 18 districts will go to polls on April 26.

The Lok Sabha elections were announced on March 16 after which the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into effect. Candidates can file nominations from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka, said the last date for filing nomination papers is April 4 and the scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on April 5. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 8 and the elections will be held on April 26 and counting on June 4. The election process will end on June 6, he said.

A total of 58,834 polling stations have been identified. As per the revised final electoral rolls for 2024, published on January 22, Karnataka has 5.38 crore electors, including 2.68 crore women and 4,920 in the others category.

Mr. Meena said candidates can also file online nominations on ENCORE, a software developed by the ECI to streamline and enhance candidate and election management. "The candidate not only will be able to fill the form online, but he will also be able to upload the affidavit and deposit the security payment online. Although this system was available in the 2023 Assembly elections too, we did not receive any online nominations then. Candidates can file online and also submit papers in person," he said.

On April 26

The 14 parliamentary constituencies that go to poll on April 26 are Udupi-Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Mandya, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru Central, Bengaluru South, Chickballapur and Kolar. While all political parties have almost announced their candidates, leaders have started campaigns following visits to temples and places of worship.

Seizures

The Election Commission has made total seizures worth over ₹ 55.76 crore since March 16 when the MCC came into force in Karnataka. This includes cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals.

The amount of cash seized was ₹19.69 crore, while liquor worth ₹26.19 crore, narcotics worth ₹88.37 lakh and freebies worth ₹ 65.43 lakh were seized.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY

KAMAKSHI SUBRAMANIAN (88)
Attained Shivaloka Prapthi
On 23rd March 2024.

GRIEVED BY FAMILY, FRIENDS AND STUDENTS.

9282217009, 9551076669

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of

" V.R.G "

(Shri. V.R. GOPALAKRISHNAN)
Journalist & Businessman
DOB: 15/04/1932 DOD: 28/03/2015

Lives of great men all remind us, we can make our lives sublime, and, departing, leave behind us, footprints on the sands of time

Family Members & Staff
Sri Rama Lodge & Cafe
& GROUP CONCERNS
Kanaka Sarovar Hotels
Kancheepuram / Chennai
SEETHARAMA KALYANA MANDAPAM, Vadakkencherry

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client Sri.Ramesh T S, son of Late T Hanumanthappa, residing at No.126, Devalaya, Flat No.A3, 3rd Main, 6th Cross, Defence Colony, Bengaluru – 560 038., declare that our client has lost the Original Allotment letter, Possession certificate and Sale Deed dated 16.01.1982 with respect to site No.548/C, in Binnamangala Extension measuring East to West 45'.0" North to South 93'.3" ft. bounded on East; Site No.548/B, West; Site No.548/D (Corner), North; 80' Road, South; Site No.549/C. Despite his best efforts our client has not been able to trace the same and has filed an online complaint on 13.03.2024 with the Police Unit, at Bengaluru City, vide Lost Report No. 0971801/2024. Any person finding the documents and returning the same to our client will be suitably rewarded.

Nayan Bichali
Advocate Associate
Sreevatsa Associate
50, II STAGE, INDIRANAGAR,
BANGALORE 560 038
91-80-25252898, 25297715, 25295506

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Notice is hereby given to Public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule property from its owners **1).Mr. D. CHANDRASHEKAR** S/o D. Doddaiah, Residing at No. 486, 6th Main, 12th Cross, Near Sapthagiri Hospital, A.G.B. Layout, Chikkasandra, Chikkabanavara, Bangalore-560090 **2). Mr. VIJAYA BHASKAR RAJU NAMBALA** S/o Venkataraju, Residing at: Villa No. 5, White Orchirds Villa, Rustumji Layout, White Field Main Road, White field Bangalore-560 066. **3). C. ANTHONY RAJ.** S/o M. Chinnappa, Residing at: No. 25, 1st Cross, Behind Government School, Ashwathnagar, R.M.V. 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560092. And **4). Mr. D. RAJASHEKAR** S/o D Doddaiah, Residing at: No. 498, 8th Cross, 2nd Main Road, SIT Layout, Kuvempu Nagar, Tumkur-572 103.
Any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in respect of said property by way of sale, inheritance, bequest, exchange, gift, possession, trust, Mortgage, lease, license, lien, charge, tenancy, lis pendency, development rights, maintenance, easement, or under any agreement of sale or Power of Attorney, option, right of first refusal or pre-emption whatsoever or otherwise howsoever, is hereby required to make the same known in writing with documentary proof thereof, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below **within 10 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the sale transaction shall be completed without any reference to such right, title, interest, claim or demand & the same shall be deemed to have been waived to all intents & purposes. Claims without documentary proofs and/or objections directly published in Newspaper shall not be considered as Valid.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and Parcel of the undeveloped Residentially Converted vacant Land **bearing Survey No. 43/1, Presently Katha No. 689/43/1,, issued by BBMP, measuring an extent fo 0-3.12 Guntas OR 4083.75 Square feet, out of 0-17.08 Guntas,** vide official Memorandum order No. ALN.(NAY) SR/32/2016-17, dated 27.03.2018, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore. situated at **SAMPIGEHALLI VILLAGE,** Yelahanka Hobli, Previously Bangalore North Taluk, Presently Yelahanka Taluk, and bounded on the; East By : Remaining Portion of the same Survey No. 43/1, West By : Remaining Portion of the same Sy No. 43/1 North By: Vacant Place in Sy No. 43/1 belongs to Kasturi Devi, South By : Road

Sd/- **HANUMANTH R.** Advocate Mob: 96206 97201

Sri. PRAVEEN KUMAR RODDAM
S/o Surendra Babu Roddam
Residing at #A-1002,10th Floor Bairavi Cruz Laxury Apartment, Chelekeri Main Road, Opp: to St. Rocks church, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore-560043 Mobile: 95381 00008
Place: Bangalore Date: 28-3-2024

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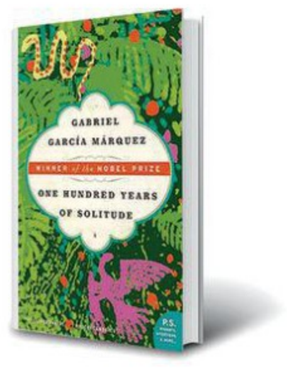
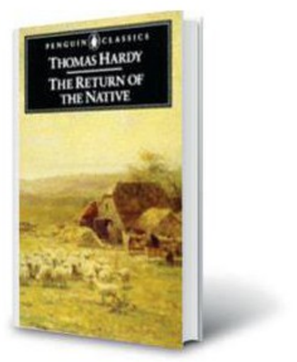
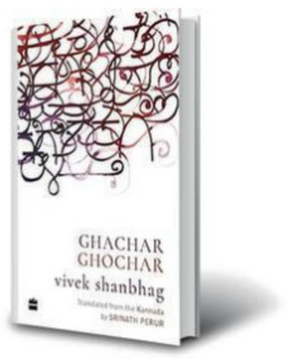






ISTOCKPHOTO

When images speak: why it is difficult not to judge a book by its cover

Publishers experiment with colours, paintings, typography, illustrations, graphic design and even film stills to promote books. Sometimes multiple editions with different covers are brought out, but to find out the quality of a book, the statutory warning should be: always read

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

Never judge a book by its cover', remains an old maxim. Yet, a reader's first organic point of contact with a tome is its cover, be it the visual recognition of that wrapping page or the rational expectation of what may lie in store within those flaps.

Covers with their visual stimuli goads us into a tactile pursuit. We hold the book, observe the cover, read the title and then flip to see the blurbs on the back. At times there is an olfactory indulgence too as a few of us smell the book with its notes of sawdust and faint traces of ink.

This is our endeavour to figure out whether what we hold is hot off the press or something imbued with age, dog-ears and the odd silverfish burrowing in. The cover stays vital and judgements are made.

Within the Indian context, Harper Perennial, which issues English translations of Indian vernacular classics, caught the eye with the way the publisher added a lovely touch to the covers.

Eye on aesthetics

Vivek Shanbhag's Kannada masterpiece *Ghachar Ghochar*, translated by Srinath Perur, had a simple cover high on aesthetics. There was the title credit and on the fringes and sides, a collage of the Kannada alphabets were laid out. It is a template that Harper Perennial has used for its entire translation series with the alphabets linked to the author's mother-tongue and all shaded with different colours. It could be green for one book, yellow for another and the third could have the letters in purple. The feel is earthy, like traditional curry left simmering in clay pots by our grandmothers.

Book covers arrive in many types. All of us are exposed to vintage publications with their dark covers and their tinge of rust-brown and dark-red tropes. Penguin, worldwide, used to have a black spine and a black frame on the cover with the title placed in the centre with its white base. These packaging efforts became a subject of research in Phil Baines' *Penguin by Design, A Cover Story 1935-2005*.

These old covers are perhaps our first link to books, be it in a home library or at college. Usually the reputation of the book prevails and be it Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* or Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, you would reach out even if the cover is like those curtains in old cinema theatres, bland, dark and just doing its job. Even now these covers remain in vogue and for proof, just saunter into any neighbourhood bookshop and head to its classics section.

Just as paper, a product of sighing trees, evolved into different types ranging from the plain to glossy, covers too evolved and acquired character. An image became essential to make the book stand out among its papyrus cousins. A century back or even a few decades ago, the cover was often a painting hinting at what lies in store.

Hat-tip to illustrators

Take for instance John Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven*. Its old cover features a lady with a hat, leaning backwards into a wooden pillar. The effect is pastoral and it sets you up for some literary foraging.

Even Gabriel Garcia Marquez's classics had covers that featured illustrations. Vintage Publications offering the Latin master's classics in their old iteration along with newer packaged versions, is actually a hat-tip to the illustrators and designers of a bygone era, plus it taps into our sense of nostalgia.

Closer home, we had R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends*, with the cover striking the right feel thanks to deft touches by the author's cartoonist brother R. K. Laxman. The output exuded childhood's magic laced with a naughty streak. Just as covers began to break into three patterns – classical, painting-laced or just a bold text with a bright palette as base, another type emerged which leant on photographs.

Often autobiographies lean on the subject's face and it is the same with a few books of famous writers. Like for instance Ruskin Bond, who as a younger version is holding a cat in a black and white montage or is smiling into the camera with 89 summers blessing his visage. Then there are these atmospheric covers too like *Sherlock Holmes, The Complete Novels and Stories* by Arthur Conan Doyle, in which the detective striding away into an old London street, serves as the visual magnet. It is a device used in modern day lore too as reflected in Amor Towles' *A Gentleman in Moscow*.

But the laziest endeavour is the use of a still from a movie that is based on the book. Be it *One Day, Nights in Rodanthe* or *The Horse Whisperer*, cinema is used to sell the book and it leads to another related query: What did you prefer, the movie or the book? This book-movie symbiosis altering covers happened with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* too as the old one was replaced with its filmy interpretation as Shreya Saran twirled her dress! The tales around covers are many but to know the quality of a book, the statutory warning should be: always read.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

For his contributions to astronomy, the International Astronomical Union has named an asteroid after Prof. Jayant Murthy. Here's a quiz on other asteroid names

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

In the inner region of the asteroid belt lies an asteroid about 10 km wide, discovered by astronomer Martin Watt in 1982. Name the British philologist and writer for whom Watt named the asteroid. Three of this person's books were adapted as films released in 2001, 2002, and 2003.

QUESTION 2

Astronomers discovered two asteroids in 1989 and 1996 and named them right then. In September 2011, they made their closest approaches to the earth so far — a wonderful coincidence because the people they'd been named for were also the stars of a hit rom-com released in 1999. Name the asteroids.

QUESTION 3

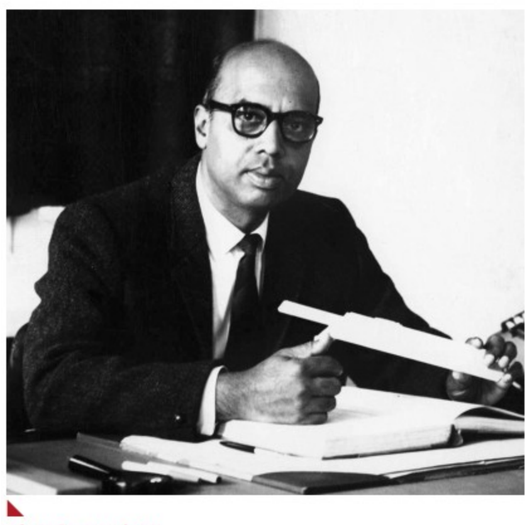
This asteroid was discovered in 2004 and subsequently given the name of an antagonist from the TV show *Star Gate SG-1*. Name the asteroid.

QUESTION 4

A Japanese astronomer discovered this asteroid in 1991 and named it after a monster that appears in a famous nonsensical poem. The author of this poem later said he named the monster after Anglo-Saxon words for "the result of much excited and voluble discussion". Name the asteroid.

QUESTION 5

This asteroid is named for a poem and a warrior of Old English literature. It belongs to a group that also includes the asteroid Bennu, which has a 0.13% chance of smashing into the earth between 2178 and 2290. Name the asteroid.



Visual question:

Name this Indian astronomer. He remains the only Indian with an asteroid and a comet named for him. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This Tarantino film paid homage to the sub-genre of blaxploitation films. **Ans: *Jackie Brown***
2. The dance sequence of John Travolta in *Pulp Fiction* was credited by Tarantino this filmmaker. **Ans: Jean-Luc Godard**
3. This film won Tarantino his second Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. **Ans: *Django Unchained***
4. The name of the 1987 amateur comedy film directed by Tarantino. Some of the film's dialogues were used in this film as well. **Ans: *My Best Friend's Birthday*; *True Romance***
5. Tarantino became an officially recognised critic on this website. **Ans: Rotten Tomatoes**
6. In 2022, Tarantino stated that this film is "the greatest movie of all time. Maybe not the best film, but the best movie ever made". **Ans: Steven Spielberg's *Jaws***
7. This film was a novelization of the same name. **Ans: *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood***
Visual: Identify this Tarantino film. **Ans: *Kill Bill* which is a martial arts film**
Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| Rajmohan. V| Ish Sparsh|

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Will O' the wisp (Dhandapani, Coimbatore)"

" 'Will o' the wisp' is 'a bluish light that may be seen on marshy ground.' It misleads people who try to follow it. The light is the result of combustion of gases from vegetable matter. Figuratively, it means 'a person or thing that is impossible to catch or reach.'

Ministership is a will o' the wisp for him.

'Will o' the wisp' is a delusive hope or goal. 'Will' is a contraction of 'William.' Originally, it was 'Will with the wisp.' 'Wisp' originally meant 'a marshfire.' It now means a small separate bunch or bundle as of straw.

Believe it or not, he tripped on a wisp of grass.

It also means 'a small streak or ribbon.'

I was alarmed when I noticed a wisp of smoke coming out of the switch.

It is also used with something small, frail or delicate.

She is a wisp of a girl.

There was a wisp of a smile on her face.

'Wispy' is the adjective of 'wisp.'

It is a wispy plant.

In some dialects of Britain, 'wisp' is used to mean 'a small twist of straw used to rub down a horse.' According to Russian folklore, the flitting lights over marshy areas are the spirits of stillborn babies moving between heaven and hell."

"Thanks to (S. Sasi Joan, Dindigul)"

"'Thanks to' means 'because of somebody or something'.

Thanks to his timely help, I was able to pay the fee in time.

It is also used ironically sometimes.

Thanks to his tuition, I failed in the examination.

'Have oneself to thank for' means 'to be the cause of (one's own misfortune).'

He must only thank himself for his failure in the examination.

Here 'thank' is used ironically. 'Thank God' or 'thank goodness' or 'thank heavens' is an 'expression of relief or pleasure.'

Thank God, he is safe.

Thank goodness, he has left.

'Thank one's lucky stars' means 'be or feel especially fortunate.'

You must thank your lucky stars for your present position.

When somebody offers you something and you accept it, you say, Thank You. If you decline it, you must say, 'No, thank you.' 'Thankless' means 'not feeling or expressing gratitude, unappreciated (of an action), not likely to win thanks or appreciation or reward for the person performing it.'

They are thankless children.

'Thanksgiving' is an expression of gratitude, especially to God. Thanksgiving Day is a holiday in America observed on the fourth Thursday of November as a day of giving thanks to God. It commemorates the Pilgrim Fathers' celebration of the good harvest of 1621. Pumpkin pies and turkey are part of the traditional fare. 'Thank-you' is used as a noun to mean 'an instance of expression of thanks.'

He left without so much as a thank-you.

Please go and say your thank-you to auntie.

'Thank-you' can also be used as an adjective.

He sent me a nice thank-you card.

Published in The Hindu on July 30, 1991.

Word of the day

Tome:
a (usually) large and scholarly book

Usage: *The tome was far heavier than what I expected.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/tomepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /təʊm/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Filling mobility gaps: How Bengaluru can learn from cities worldwide

Bengaluru is still in the initial stages of building a suburban rail network, which was first proposed over 35 years ago. Lack of reliable suburban train system has forced lakhs of people to move into the city's core, triggering absolute urban chaos. Seasoned campaigners for the commuter rail are convinced that fast-tracking suburban network is the only escape route

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

Trams, both in Sydney and Melbourne, connect inner CBD areas. Though slow-moving, they are an easy way to bypass the traffic.

The well-networked suburban rail network in Sydney runs high frequency double decker trains till 3 a.m.

Struggling to connect and streamline its multiple mobility modes, can Bengaluru learn from transport innovations designed and enforced with much care in many cities worldwide? From seamless inter-modal connectivity to common ticketing to tech-based predictability of public transport, the best practices are not rocket science but doable without mammoth investments.

Yes, many First World cities are leagues ahead of Bengaluru in terms of public infrastructure. Decades of sound investment in well-designed roads, footpaths, safe intersections, crossings were preceded by futuristic town-planning that judiciously earmarked space for walkers, buses, cyclists and strictly regulated motorways.

Low-hanging solutions

Having lost decades in poor planning, Bengaluru is playing catchup with mixed results.

But what the city could do is first grab those low-hanging fruits: Boost the predictability of BMTC buses with basic technology that has been available for years, upgrade those bus stops with good lighting, seating and digital display boards, make footpaths obstacle-free and fast-track the suburban rail construction.

Spread out and with much less population than Bengaluru, Sydney rarely faces the extreme traffic jams that are a daily affair here. Decades back, the Australian city invested in a well-connected suburban train network that ferries thousands of commuters between the distant suburbs and the Central Business District (CBD) area. Built as a hybrid urban-suburban system, the network covers over 813 kms of track with 170 stations on eight lines. A central underground core covers 369 km of route length.

Bengaluru is still in the initial building stage of a similar suburban rail network, which was first proposed over 35 years ago. Lack of a fast, reliable suburban train system forced lakhs of people to move into the city's core, triggering absolute urban chaos. As the population soared beyond 1.3 crore, vehicular numbers exceeded 1.1 crore, severely straining the limited road infrastructure. Seasoned campaigners for the commuter rail are convinced fast-tracking the suburban network is the only escape route.

Unlike Sydney, Melbourne or London, Southeast Asian cities such as Manila, Jakarta and Bangkok are facing similar problems encountered by Bengaluru, says Sathya Sankaran from Citizens for Sustainability (CiFoS).

Car domination

"The car dominated infrastructure is continuing everywhere. When I went from Bangkok to Ayutthaya town, I found a lot of highways, but the train had very minimal service," he recalls.

Jakarta, he notes, is a very big city with about 24 million people. "Manila is also very big. Bangkok is also sprawling, but they are all making the same mistake of not focussing on mass transport, walkability or cyclability. In Bangkok, the newer developments are very far away. The older cities are nicer, you can still walk. But there are no lights on the footpaths, it is dark most of the time. They are failing to build mass transport facilities and build transit-oriented development around it. Train infrastructure is being built extremely slowly," he explains.

Invest in heavy infra now

Suburbs in Sydney are laid out years in advance before the property developers move in. But Bengaluru, without even a proper master plan on the horizon continues to be haphazard in its sprawling growth. "A lot of the populated cities should make investments in heavy infrastructure now because it is getting increasingly expensive. The cost of labour, land, and infrastructure are all going up. Building the same 20 years from now will mean bearing astronomical costs."

If this is about planning far into the future, the developed world cities have shown how predictability of public transport increases usage.

As the fledgling BMTC App struggles to locate buses real time, the Tripview Lite App in Sydney shows when exactly your next bus arrives at the nearest bus stop, accurate to the last minute. The App updates the location status in real time so that you can adjust your travel plan accordingly. The bus or train service could be searched by route, station, stop or route. Any change in timetable is updated in real time.

Bus predictability, real-time status

But will Bengalureans shift to public transport in big numbers if the buses are predictable alone? Independent mobility consultant Satya Arikutharam observes: "Most commuters are cost conscious. They are also dependent on minimum quality expectations."

" Besides reliability, cleanliness, chance to at least stand without being pushed and shoved around, and how close the end point is to the destination, are all key factors. If these criteria are not met, even if I want to travel, I will not."

Boosting the grossly inadequate bus fleet could potentially improve frequency and predictability. For years, vociferous demands for more buses have not really pushed the total bus numbers beyond a miniscule 6,400. Satya draws attention to the reason why the urgency is missing: "BMTC comes under the ministry of transport, while subsidised buses are through the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission that comes under the Ministry of Urban and Housing affairs."

This, he says, means somebody is subsidising the buses, somebody else is managing the operations. "So there is no cohesion at all even within the same mode in terms of management control. Besides, there is no route integration between metro and buses. What we have is a very substandard and inefficient public transport system," he points out.

Critical to large-scale public transport adoption is reliability of last-mile connectivity. Almost all suburban train stations in Sydney have bus stops within a short walking distance. To connect newer suburbs with less frequent bus services, there is an on-demand Cooee minibus service. Commuters heading into or out of a train station could search for it on an App and hop on if it is closeby. This service acts as a hybrid, integrating the availability of public transport with the convenience of a cab.

Trams in Karanth Layout!

In Melbourne, trams are an extensive part of the public transport network. Within a rectangular grid in the inner city, these are even free. But will such a service work in Bengaluru? What if trams run from Vidhana Soudha to Queen's Road, M.G. Road, Cubbon Park and back to Ambedkar Veedhi in a loop? Many feel this can work only if many stretches are pedestrianised. However, the practicality is questionable due to multiple factors including road width, haphazard driving behaviour and safety.

Instead, Satya suggests introduction of tram services within large upcoming residential areas such as the Shivaram Karanth Layout with about 34,000 sites. "This is a big opportunity to try out the service for commuting between different phases within the layout," he says.

This might just be the beginning of a car-free neighbourhood concept, the first experiment of which went live in Tempe, Arizona two months ago. The neighbourhood called Culdesac is on a 17-acre site, transformed as a walkable, human-scale community devoid of cars and parking slots. The first 36 residents moved in early this year. Will the next experiment take shape in a gated community in Bengaluru?

AWS and EkStep collaborate to foster Digital Public Infrastructure

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amazon Web Services (AWS) India Private Limited on Wednesday announced that it is collaborating with EkStep Foundation (EkStep), a non-profit organisation in India focused on catalysing societal transformation to establish a Joint Innovation Center (JIC) to help foster the development of innovative digital solutions for public service delivery.

This joint effort will focus on enabling and accelerating the creation of digital public goods (DPGs) and Digital Public Infrastructures (DPIs).

It aims to support both public sector and commercial institutions in building and harnessing digital solutions for population-scale use while helping governments build socially and digitally inclusive economies, said a press release.

The JIC is a customer-centric programme that is founded on Amazon's culture of innovation philosophy, which encourages builders to work backwards from end-customer needs, use data to drive decision-making.

Government will back transport ecosystem to create additional revenue of ₹500 cr: Ramalinga Reddy

The Minister recently announced the fourth edition of Prawaas, a multimodal transport show scheduled to be held between August 29 and 31 at the Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ramalinga Reddy at the curtain raiser to the fourth edition of Prawaas. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The State government will back the entire transport ecosystem including multimodal public initiatives and passenger mobility to raise an additional revenue of ₹500 to the exchequer, said Ramalinga Reddy, Minister for Transport and Muzrai.

Announcing the fourth edition of Prawaas, a multimodal transport show scheduled to be held between August 29 and 31 at the Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), the Minister said, ''We have already boosted accessibility with the online All India Permit Service and reduced parking fees at the Kalasipalyam bus stop. We will back the entire ecosystem, aiming to generate 500 crores annually."

According to the Minister, in the past three years, Prawaas has united the bus, taxi, and transport industry to address regulatory needs and system improvements. Support from the state and central government was critical for enhancing quality of life and industry growth, he added.

"Our focus is on delivering top-notch tourism experiences as prioritizing tourism development will drive growth in the transport sector."

"We will also focus on necessitating infrastructure improvements, safe roads, better accessibility, and reduced taxes. Nationwide, 380 million people travel by bus, with Karnataka alone carrying 120 million passengers by government-run buses,'' Mr. Reddy further said.

With the overarching theme of ''Safe, Smart, and Sustainable Passenger Mobility," Prawaas 4.0 is expected to bring together the entire spectrum of multimodal transport stakeholders comprising manufacturers of buses and cars, fleet owners, as well as partners in metro and LEVs from all 36 States and Union Territories of India.

Prasanna Patwardhan, President, Bus & Car Operators Confederation of India, said, "In the bustling streets of Bengaluru, a city thriving with transportation innovation, we stand at a pivotal juncture, recalling Darwin's enduring wisdom: adaptability is paramount for survival."

Accessible transport

The growing demand for accessible public transport was evident, given the surge in personal vehicles and infrastructure costs, he said. At present, 92% of buses in the country are owned by private players while 85% of the people solely rely on public transit. "This underscores the urgent need to reconsider public transport, bridge the gap between private and public transit, and reform taxes to incentivise bus usage,'' Patwardhan added.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 28, 1974

Prasanna and Chandrasekhar Paved Way for Karnataka's Historic Win

Jaipur, March 27: Skipper E.A.S. Prasanna (5 for 45) and Test leg spinner B.S. Chandrasekhar (3 for 56) bowled Karnataka to a 185-run victory over Rajasthan to clinch the Ranji Trophy, symbol of Indian cricket supremacy, for the first time in its career on the penultimate day of the five-day final here today.

The scores: Karnataka 276 and 212; Rajasthan 176 and 127

Since the inception of the Ranji Trophy in 1934-35, this is the third time that Karnataka has reached the final. On the earlier two occasions in 1941-42 and 1959-60. Karnataka (then Mysore) lost to Bombay.

Karnataka wrapped up the match when Chandrasekhar clean bowled the last man C.G. Joshi, for a duck with the total at 127, exactly half an hour before tea. Karnataka would have won the match by a bigger margin and much earlier, but for an elegant 51 by P. Sharma, who put on 54 runs for the third wicket in 55 minutes with captain Hanumanth Singh (20).

Once Hanumant and Sharma left the scene, the remaining Rajasthan batsmen went down meekly to the wily Prasanna and the deadly Chandrasekhar.

For the home team, which required 313 runs to win the Ranji Trophy for the first time, it was the eighth unsuccessful attempt in the final It had lost to Bombay in the earlier appearances.

All kudos to the entire Karnataka team tor its grand achievement, but full marks belong to Prasanna, who with his astute captaincy, was mainly responsible for his side's victory over 15 times champion Bombay in the semi finals.

Prasanna who flighted the ball well and varied his length effectively, finished to-day with a match analysis of nine for 101.

Turn the beat around

GIG GUIDE

This weekend break out of your comfort zone and sample some innovative musical acts doing the rounds in the city

Anurag Tagat

Hidden Empire

March 31, 8 pm onwards
Magique, Koramangala
Tickets: Free, plus cover charge. RSVP via Insider.in

Electronic music duo Branko Stojanov and Niklas Schütze, better known as Hidden Empire, are gearing up to showcase their distinctive blend of House and Techno at Magique in Bengaluru on March 31. United by a shared musical vision, they embarked on their live project, Hidden Empire, aiming to craft immersive and emotive soundscapes that resonate deeply with listeners. Their music takes audiences on a genre-blending journey to create more than just the usual EDM experience. Featuring a fusion of straight drums and hypnotic melodies, their tracks are tailor-made for colossal sound systems and marathon club nights, promising an euphoric and uplifting atmosphere.

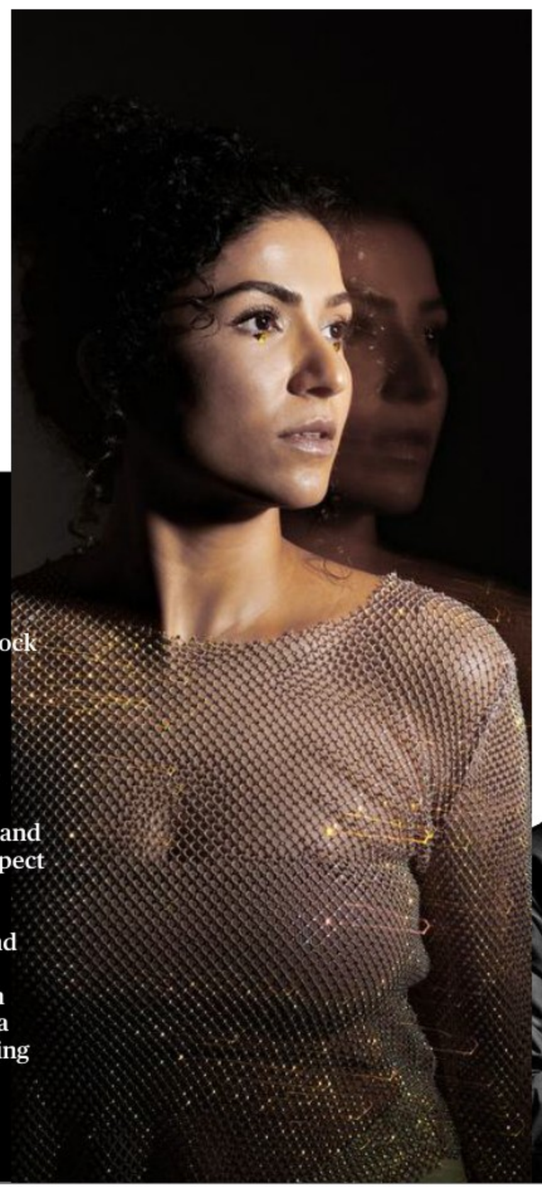
Avantika Bakshi

March 29, 7 pm onwards
Kitty Ko, Lalit Ashok, Seshadripuram
Tickets: ₹399 (women), ₹499 (couples) and ₹699 (men) via Insider.in Extra cover charge applicable

Avantika Bakshi, a trained Indian classical musician and rock vocalist, is poised to deliver an exhilarating performance at Kitty Ko in Bengaluru on March 29. Bakshi's sonic voyage transcends conventional boundaries, traversing tribal, Afro, progressive, melodic techno, downtempo and house music, offering audiences an immersive experience that defies easy categorisation.

Infusing her sets with the vibrancy of her Indian heritage and the diverse influences gathered during her global travels, expect cultural elements resonating with both local audiences and international enthusiasts as part of Bakshi's DJing.

Having graced the stages of major festivals across India and earned acclaim on the global circuit in cities such as Berlin, Amsterdam, New York, London, and the iconic Burning Man festival in Black Rock City, Bakshi has established herself as a formidable presence in the electronic music scene. Performing as part of the Redroom gig series, Avantika is joined by DJ-producers such as Artblot and Ibthisam.



Lojal, Tintin x NAOS, MarTinTin

March 31, 8 pm onwards
Indiranagar SOCIAL
Tickets: ₹569 via Lojalty.com

The latest edition of Manipur-origin, Bengaluru/Goa/Mumbai artiste Lojal's One Night Stand gig series returns to the city for a rollercoaster, epic journey. The lineup also features the debut of unreleased material from rapper Tintin with producer NAOS. Elsewhere, Tintin and Lojal link for MartTinTin. Lojal said on his social media about the event, "Throwing a rare get down this Sunday the 31st of March, in Bengaluru Indiranagar." He adds that the Lojal solo set will be "acoustic versions of some originals as well as new tunes and the classic on the spot."

As for MarTinTin, Lojal says there will be a "lots of super rare and mostly never played before pieces of production." Further, the experimentation will traverse R&B, hip-hop, trap and electronic music. The show marks the act's debut set.

The Spaven D&B Curation, Fatty Bassman, Drum ani Bass

March 30, 9 pm onwards
Fandom at Gilly's Redefined, Koramangala
Tickets: ₹699 via Insider.in, plus ₹500 entry at the door

Put together by the recently established event promoters Saras Co., UK drum and bass veteran drummer Richard Spaven will bring his Spaven D&B Curation set for the first time to Bengaluru, performing with bassist Fatty Bassman aka Chris Hargreaves. They will be supported by Mumbai act Drum ani Bass.

A description for the event states, "Experience the finest live D&B from the UK through a unique sonic journey, exploring the roots of jungle and drum & bass while paying homage to the architects of sound system culture. Richard will be joined by Christopher Hargreaves (Fatty Bassman) on bass. Expect classics, improvisation, all while honoring the origins of Jungle/D&B."

The concert will also include an interaction with Spaven, who has previously collaborated with artistes such as Mumbai-raised producer Sandunes.

CITYBEATS

Solo spotlight

MARCH 30
Rekha Raju will present a solo Mohiniyattam dance recital using compositions of contemporary poets. Rekha started learning Bharatnatyam at the age of three from Padmini Ramachandran and later learnt Mohiniyattam from A Janardhan. Tickets on BookMyShow.
At 6pm, at Shukra Auditorium, MPL Shastri Road, Malleswaram.

Go the whole hog

ONGOING
This Easter menu serves a whole roast leg of ham with citrus and honey glaze and roast vegetables, priced at ₹4,800, spicy Italian tomato herb sausage for ₹475, Goan choriço from Margao is priced at ₹410 while pork meatloaf with tomato garlic glaze comes at ₹720. There are also 'Easter hampers', priced at ₹1200.
At Curly Sue Pork. Call 919900026681

Memories and melodies

MARCH 30
Ghazn Wali Diary, an evening of ghazal performances by Muqtalif, will be held in the city this weekend. Muqtalif, means different and the band comprises three people who have found a way to remember musicians of yore and their songs, 'that must not gather dust on the pages'.
At Atta Galatta, 5pm. Tickets on BookMyShow

Fashion forward

Today, being fashion conscious is no longer a matter of style – it is a necessity. Terms such as 'rinse and repeat,' 'earthy tones' and 'repurpose and upcycle' have now entered the jargon of well-turned out individuals.

To this end, Serenity is conducting a sustainable fashion exhibition where products and labels on display have been crafted thoughtfully.

Some of the brands that will be showcased at Serenity include Inkriti which focuses on textile crafts and fabrics to create gender-neutral articles of clothing that can be worn by all, and Soneri which highlights the feminine form with block prints and natural dyes.

In a similar vein are products from Rejoice which use natural colours and are handwoven to give wearers a comfort fit. House Of Primes, a sustainable fashion initiative will also be showcasing products which, "Empower women, elevates artisans and evolves craft traditions," as per their mission statement.

Among these brands is Reepeat which promotes mindful dressing through eco-friendly clothing which is styled so it can be worn for different occasions and seasons, without contributing to landfills. Also displaying their wares will be Rimagined, a brand that upcycles tyres tubes, denim and other fabrics to produce articles of clothing and accessories.

On March 30 and 31 from 11am-6.30pm at Serenity, JayMahal Extension. Call 080 4127 9127 for details.

Green preen The clothing and decor at this exhibition have been crafted thoughtfully. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Special shout out to lovers of classical music

Shilpa Anandraj

The National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai, presents NCPA@thePark Bangalore. It is an initiative to exhibit live performances and to promote performing arts in India across prime outdoor locations for free of cost, explains Khushroo N Suntook, Chairman, NCPA and Co-founder, Symphony Orchestra of India.

The 55-year-old NCPA launched NCPA@thePark three years ago with the aim to rejuvenate live performances after pandemic-induced lockdowns. "The NCPA, in association with Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), focuses on celebrating the return of live entertainment to physical spaces," says Khusroo over phone from his residence in Mumbai.

The orchestra has been touring quite a bit, says Khushroo. "The 18-year-old orchestra has been providing classes using the Russian method, which is a tough but a good school of teaching. Ever since, we have grown in strength and the orchestra has travelled around the globe including Moscow, Oman and the UK."

The Symphony Orchestra of India has performed for the Maharani of Mysore and at the Bengaluru Palace. "Both concerts were successful. We must be the only professional symphony orchestra in India, which is a pity as there are at least 1,500 or more orchestras across the world."

Concerts like NCPA@ThePark, Khushroo says are an attempt to spread the cult of great music. "There has been a deal of success on that front."

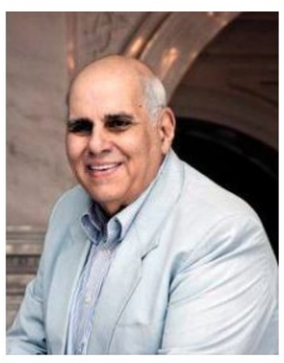
It is a misconception Khushroo says that Indians will not be open to a Western orchestra. "There are symphony orchestras in Africa and all over the world, which do not have any Western influence. In fact, the two major examples of this are Japan and China. Until 1972, Western music was banned in China. It was only 50 years ago that they opened their doors to this music and today there are thousands of western music practitioners with many of them playing with the greatest orchestras in the world."

"We have started to amalgamate Indian and western music and have had successful tours with Zakir Hussain and Rakesh Chaurasia. Classical music was established 400 years ago, and today we have music of every kind and genre all over the world."

Khushroo, who has been actively propagating the performing arts for decades, says "Collaborations between Indian and Western musicians began with Pandit Ravi Shankar. He was one of the pioneers, who crossed borders over 60 years ago. There have been many instances of Indian musicians playing with a Western orchestra."

Musicians, Khushroo says, have also seen the huge potential of an Indian orchestra. Zakir is a great champion of this. Western orchestra is like Shakespeare. It is taught in every language and every school in the world. Similarly, great art can be of any kind."

Making magic The Symphony Orchestra of India performs at NCPA@ thePark Event at Embrossia Garden, in February this year, Khushroo N Suntook (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Hailing from a family of lawyers, Khusroo is passionate about music. "My grandfather was a senior judge and my father was a leading solicitor with the Maharaja of Mysore and was active in the integration of the Indian states. I had nothing to do with music or art till I joined the Tatas three decades ago. I always loved music, which was influenced by my friendship with some of the great musicians. That was when law took a back seat and the performing arts came to the forefront."

Khushroo is thrilled about the upcoming show in Bengaluru. "I used to come to Bengaluru and play tennis for my State ages ago. People here are fond of music of all kinds. The Maharaja of Mysore was a great patron of Western classical music. He, in fact, supported one of the greatest orchestras in the world for years, the Philharmonia Orchestra in England. When I was in Mysuru three years ago, the Maharani showed the passion the late king had for music."

There is a large community of music lovers in south India, Khusroo says. "Bengaluru is one of the most advanced cities in India, intellectually. They are fond of many things that are international in nature. I find Bengaluru an interesting city, whether it is for business, playing tennis or art."

The event will be at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on March 30 and 31m 6pm onwards on both days. It is free and open to all.

From Page One

Sewage treatment plant must for apartments with over 120 units

However, in areas yet to be serviced by underground drainage lines, an in-situ STP is mandatory for all projects with over 20 units.

The Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment issued a notification on March 12. The order will be with prospective effect, and apartments that already have established smaller STPs must continue with their operations. The new notification also provides some relief to commercial projects in areas with sewerage lines.

Satish Mallya, Vice President of BAF, said, "The amendment has come as a great relief for apartment projects in Bengaluru. In our experience, smaller STPs are not feasible and drain the communities while being ineffective and not serving the purpose as well."

In 2016, the State government issued an order mandating an in-situ STP in all group housing projects above 20 units across Bengaluru and even made it with retrospective effect. This led to widespread protests and forced apartment communities to unionise for the first time.

"BAF was birthed in the fight against this order. We have come a long way since then. Now, political parties even have apartment manifestos before elections. To that extent, we have influenced policy," said Srikanth Narasimhan, one of the founders of BAF, who now heads the Bengaluru Navanirmana Party.

BAF was successful in getting the State government to amend the 2016 notification, bringing two major changes: making it prospective and introducing a differential between sewered and unsewered areas. In sewered areas, the new order mandates an STP in projects with over 50 units or if the community is producing 35 KLD of sewage.

BAF has been arguing that, in their experience, STPs of less than 100 KLD capacity are unviable.

"Such units are capital intensive. Plus, the companies that install and run smaller STPs are unreliable. In smaller apartments, the cost has to be borne by a smaller set of residents making it a burden on them. With the new rule, in-situ STP is mandatory for an apartment complex with over 120 units and is expected to produce 90-100 KLD of sewage, which is manageable," said Mr. Mallya.

ED files case against Pinarayi's daughter in CMRL pay-off case

The agency has acted on the basis of I-T report that Veena and her company Exalogic Solutions Private Ltd had received ₹1.72 crore as monthly payments from Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered an Enforcement Case Investigation Report (ECIR) in connection with the alleged monthly pay-off controversy involving the company of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's daughter T. Veena.

The ECIR has been registered by the Kochi unit of the agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

The Central agency has acted on the basis of the report by the Income Tax Interim Settlement Board in August 2023 stating that Ms. Veena and her company Exalogic Solutions Private Ltd had received ₹1.72 crore as monthly payments from the Kochi-based Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd (CMRL) despite there being no evidence of any services given in return.

Veena Vijayan

The probe by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs into the monthly pay-off case is progressing.

It is learnt that the ED probe will include the individuals and entities on the record of the Income Tax Interim Settlement Board order.

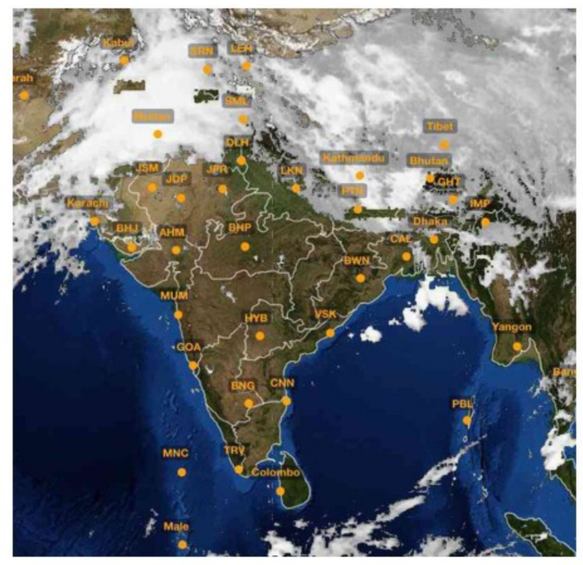
Besides Ms. Veena, the role of CMRL and the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), which holds 13.4% shares in CMRL, will also be investigated.

The High Court of Karnataka had in February rejected a petition filed by Exalogic Solutions Private Limited questioning the action of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) ordering a probe by the SFIO into the affairs of the company.

The MCA had told the court that illegal payments made to the extent of ₹135 crore by CMRL to various political functionaries in Kerala and certain other entities, including Exalogic, had necessitated the probe.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds/ hailstorm likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Heat wave conditions likely at isolated places over Saurashtra & Kutch and north interior Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	34.0	21.2	Kozhikode	—	37.0	27.7
Ahmedabad	—	41.1	26.4	Kurnool	—	40.0	25.3
Aizawl	—	30.8	17.4	Lucknow	—	35.5	18.9
Allahabad	—	39.4	18.4	Madurai	—	38.2	24.6
Bengaluru	—	35.2	21.0	Mangaluru	—	33.8	25.4
Bhopal	—	38.8	25.2	Mumbai	—	32.0	24.9
Bhubaneswar	—	36.1	24.2	Mysuru	—	36.0	21.0
Chandigarh	—	33.0	20.8	New Delhi	—	37.0	19.4
Chennai	—	35.1	24.4	Patna	—	33.5	21.1
Coimbatore	—	36.0	22.7	Port Blair	—	33.0	25.7
Dehradun	—	32.8	18.5	Puducherry	—	34.2	24.2
Gangtok	0.4	14.6	11.5	Pune	—	39.6	23.3
Goa	—	33.2	25.6	Raipur	—	38.0	25.3
Guwahati	2	26.8	18.8	Ranchi	—	34.7	18.0
Hubballi	—	40.0	23.0	Shillong	10	19.4	11.0
Hyderabad	—	37.6	24.2	Shimla	—	26.0	14.8
Imphal	—	29.5	13.6	Srinagar	—	23.0	9.5
Jaipur	—	39.1	24.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.6	25.4
Kochi	—	33.4	28.2	Tiruchi	—	37.7	23.6
Kohima	8	20.8	9.0	Vijayawada	—	37.1	23.4
Kolkata	—	35.6	25.2	Visakhapatnam	—	32.6	25.3

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	33	.24	203	169	
Bengaluru	.10	.17	.23	101	131	
Chennai	9	8	.96	39	47	
Delhi	.16	.41	.53	261	247	
Hyderabad	4	.33	.47	59	131	
Kolkata	7	.38	.29	50	57	
Lucknow	.10	.14	.77	118	132	
Mumbai	.83	.32	.44	89	109	
Pune	.96	117	116	70	79	
Visakhapatnam	.12	.43	.22	62	101	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Nandesari, Gujarat recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 263 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 27

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

HC junks plea to advance date of vote counting in T.N.

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Wednesday dismissed a writ petition for quashing the Lok Sabha election notification issued for Tamil Nadu, fixing April 19 as the polling date and June 4 as the date for the counting of votes.

Chief Justice Sanjay V. Gangapurwala and Justice D. Bharatha Chakravarthy rejected the plea from writ petitioner Ezhilan to issue a direction to advance the date of counting to avoid the long gap of 45 days between polling and counting.

Act of 1951

A. Rajini, counsel for the petitioner, argued that providing such a long gap of 45 days went against the spirit of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which provides for the conduct of free and fair elections. She also claimed that it was arbitrary and illegal to delay the counting.

However, when the Chief Justice wanted to know whether there was any provision in the 1951 Act that requires the Election Commission of India to count the votes within a specific period, counsel admitted that the Act has no such provision.

After recording her submission, the judges wrote, "We do not find that the present petition espouses any public cause. It is more in the nature of a publicity interest litigation. The date of polling and counting has to be determined by only the Election Commission of India."

ED issues fresh summons to Isaac in masala bonds case

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to former Kerala Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac asking him to appear before its investigators at its Kochi office on April 2 in connection with an investigation into the issue of masala bonds by KIIFB.

Dr. Isaac had not turned up despite earlier summons by the agency for interrogation. The ED suspects that funds were raised and utilised in violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act. The former Minister had opposed the agency move by terming the issue of summons as illegal. The Central agency had informed the Kerala HC on March 26 that its probe was getting delayed. His conduct is unbecoming of a law-abiding citizen and the ED would be forced to resort to measures under the PMLA to enforce the summon, it said.

Rowdy hacked to death

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 35-year-old rowdy sheeter was hacked to death at the reception of a lodge at Kammanahalli on Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Dinesh. He was waiting at the reception when armed men attacked him and escaped within minutes after hacking him to death.

Dinesh was checking into the room and waiting for his associates to make the payment when the incident occurred. The assailants had carried the machete in bags, said the police.

The Banasawadi police rushed to the spot and collected CCTV footage from in and around the area and from the hotel premises to identify the assailants.

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder

Call our toll-free number 1800 102 1878
Or write to us at customercare@thehindu.co.in
Scan the QR code to register your feedback

THE HINDU businessline.
FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR THE HINDU Young World THE HINDU

MANGALURU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MANGALURU ("AIRPORT")

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN BIDDING PROCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PRECISION APPROACH LIGHTING (PAL) AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT THE AIRPORT

Interested parties are invited to participate in the competitive e-tendering process for development of PAL and associated Foundations, Structural towers, etc. at the Airport.

Interested parties are requested to visit the website, **https://airports.abcprocure.com/** and access the Request for Qualification **(RFQ)** document(s).

RFQ access shall be available from March 28th, 2024, till IST 5:00 pm on April 1st, 2024.

Government of Karnataka

THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY (UNDER KPIDFE - IMA & OTHER SCAM)

3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V Tower, Dr. Ambedkar veedhi, Bengaluru-560001

NOTICE/ INVITATION FOR E- AUCTION FOR MOVABLE ITEMS

Pursuant to attachment of movable properties by the Government under the provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act, 2004(KPIDFE Act) and pursuant to the absolute attachment order by the Hon'ble Special Court the Special Officer & Competent Authority(under KPIDFE-IMA and other Scam), is issuing notice for e-auction of the movablesattached through e-auction on 'as is where is and whatever there is basis'.

"SPLOCA" hereby invites bids from the intending bidders along with a bid deposit as mentioned in the table below as Earnest Money for MOVABLE ITEMS- Crafts &Textile items to be paid through DD drawn in favor of "Special Officer and Competent Authority (EMD)" or through RTGS/ NEFT to the Account number 41506340119, IFSC Code: SBIN0040277 STATE BANK OF INDIA, VIDHANA SOUDHA Branch.

CRAFT ITEMS

TEXTILE ITEMS

Short Description of the Movable items

Description of items	Reserve Price (Rs)	EMD (Rs)	Bid Increase Value (Rs)	Last Date of Submission of Bid Documents & EMD submission	Date of Inspection & time	Date of Pre-bid meeting & time	Date & Time of E Auction
Metal Items	2,13,604/-	11,000/-	1000/-	15th April 2024 Before 5 pm	17th April 2024 11 am to 2 pm	17th April 2024 3 pm to 4 pm	19th April 2024 11 am to 1 pm
Wood Items	7,24,506/-	36,000/-	4,000/-				
Marble Items	4,79,504/-	24,000/-	2,500/-				
Art Jewellery & Bangles	1,24,307/-	6,000/-	600/-				
Silver Items	8,14,684/-	41,000/-	4,000/-				
Sandal Soap & Powder	44,576/-	2,000/-	200/-				
Orissa Painting	1,01,730	5,000/-	500/-				

Description of items	Reserve Price (Rs)	EMD (Rs)	Bid Increase Value (Rs)	Last Date of Submission of Bid Documents & EMD submission	Date of Inspection & time	Date of Pre-bid meeting & time	Date & Time of E Auction
Ladies Clothing & Accessories	22,40,000	1,12,000/-	11,000/-	15th April 2024 Before 5 pm	17th April 2024 11 am to 2 pm	17th April 2024 3 pm to 4 pm	19th April 2024 11 am to 1 pm
Gents & Common Clothing	7,20,000	36,000/-	3600/-				
Thaan	5,40,000	27,000/-	2700/-				

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Timely restatement

Supreme Court makes a case against pre-trial restraint on journalistic content

A restatement of basic principles of law is always welcome, especially if there are judicial orders that seem to ignore them. The Supreme Court's recent order cautioning courts against granting pre-trial injunctions against the media in civil suits for defamation is a reminder that such orders could have severe ramifications on the freedom of speech and may impair the public's right to know. "Granting interim injunctions before the trial commences, in a cavalier manner results in the stifling of public debate," the Court observed, while setting aside a Delhi lower court order, also confirmed by the Delhi High Court, that directed news outlet Bloomberg to take down an article concerning Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. within a week for being allegedly defamatory. The brief order has not only reiterated the standard three-fold test for granting interim injunctions in general, but reminded the judicial officers that the "constitutional mandate of protecting journalistic expression cannot be understated" when it comes to cases against the media. The admonition against courts mechanically applying the three limbs of the test – whether there is a *prima facie* case, whether the 'balance of convenience' is in favour of an interim restraint, and lastly, whether not granting it will cause "irreparable loss or harm" to the plaintiff – by merely recording that these grounds have been satisfied is quite apposite. The courts granting an injunction are also expected to record reasons by analysing the facts.

However, it is with unfortunate frequency that one hears of three kinds of judicial orders that place questionable curbs on journalistic publications: outright gag orders banning any publication of information related to cases being heard by the courts, omnibus prior restraint orders against all media houses based on a plaintiff's fear that a defamatory statement may be repeated by others and, finally, pre-trial orders to specific media houses to take down an article and refrain from further publication. Such orders will not be possible unless one ignores the common law principle in *Bonnard vs Perryman*, which lays down the standard that there can be an injunction in a defamation suit only if the court feels that the content is defamatory and that there can be no way the publication can be justified during trial, for instance by pleading the defence of truth and public interest. The latest order also contains a reminder that those with influence and economic power can resort to 'SLAPP' (Strategic Litigation/Lawsuit against Public Participation), a tactic often used to stifle public criticism of projects and companies. The Court has struck the right note when it warns that an early injunction in what could be a prolonged trial acts as a 'death sentence' against the material to be published.

Toxic words

Women should bring down barriers to their own advancement

Congress social media in-charge Supriya Shrinate's denigrating post on actor Kangana Ranaut, now deleted, is unconscionable. It is unacceptable that instead of apologising, her defence, through a video post, was that many people have access to her Facebook and Instagram accounts, and that someone made an "extremely inappropriate post". Ms. Ranaut, who is set to contest her maiden election from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh on a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ticket, took to X to castigate Ms. Shrinate, pointing out that women must be freed from "shackles of prejudices" and no one should use the challenging lives of sex workers or their circumstances as "some kind of abuse or slur". Ms. Ranaut expressed her hurt, and a political storm has erupted over Ms. Shrinate's needless, pejorative comments ahead of a crucial general election when there are many issues at stake – from the electoral bonds scam, rising unemployment, distress of the poor, shrinking space for freedom of expression and so on. By blaming others for what appeared on her handle, Ms. Shrinate has gone against everything she vouches to stand for, particularly on women. Her colleague Pawan Khera's clarification that she "can never resort" to such talk also does not cut ice because the "objectionable language" did appear under her name.

By being on the receiving end, Ms. Ranaut too should refrain from equally disparaging remarks such as those she had made in the past against a fellow woman actor who had got an election ticket. For women, challenges persist at home and in the workplace. They face a long road to gender equality which remains frustratingly out of reach. India finally passed a law last year to reserve 33% of seats for women legislators, but there has been no deadline set for its implementation. In the absence of such a commitment, it remains a wish on paper. The initial candidates' lists show that even the BJP, under whose watch the legislation came into place, is nowhere close to reaching the 33% mark, a key factor that can immediately have a positive outcome for women's empowerment. When the Women's Reservation Bill, 2023 was passed, about 14% of the Lok Sabha legislators were women, far below the global average of 26.5%; Himachal Pradesh has only one woman Lok Sabha MP. Women should have a voice in how their lives should be run, and becoming an elected representative is one step towards ensuring policies are made and implemented with them in mind. Women should work towards removing barriers to their advancement, not make the path more difficult.

The politics of humanitarian aid

T.S. Tirumurti

was Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York (2020-22) when India was in the UN Security Council, and, earlier, first Representative of India to the Palestinian Authority in Gaza (1996-98)

When United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken says that "100 percent of the population in Gaza is at severe levels of acute food insecurity" and that is the "first time an entire population has been so classified", and, soon after, the U.S. Congress proceeds to stop funding till March 2025 to the UN Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA (it is the only UN agency delivering lifesaving humanitarian aid to millions of Palestine refugees living in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria), then the politics of humanitarian aid is back in full play – by implication, politics with human life, with Palestinian lives.

Ironically, this comes at a time when some western countries, which had announced defunding UNRWA, have 'realised' that Israeli allegations are unsubstantiated and are resuming funding. But there is a crucial political angle. Defunding UNRWA would mean tacitly derecognising Palestinian refugees and effectively killing one of the contentious unresolved issues for Palestinian statehood – right of return of refugees. This is what Israel had demanded all along.

There is no free lunch. There is no free lunch in geopolitics either. Even if it means starving millions to achieve one's political or military goals. This is not just about Gaza, though Gaza is the latest example.

Gaza waits for a pier

The announcement by U.S President Joe Biden to build a temporary pier off the Gaza coast in the Mediterranean Sea to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians holed up in Gaza is an example of how a simple act of sending food and medicines to a population that has been starved of both can become hostage to politics. All Israel has to do is to allow food convoys to go in from a land opening in Rafah or Karem Abu Salem. And all that the U.S. has to do is to ask Israel, a country dependent fully on the U.S. to prosecute this war, not to block aid convoys. But the U.S. did not ask Israel this. Instead, it undertook the air drop of food packets - 38,000 packets for 1.4 million Palestinians in Rafah. In a tragic incident in Gaza, Israeli soldiers shot and killed 112 Palestinians and injured hundred others who were waiting to collect food. Twelve people drowned while trying to retrieve packets which fell into the sea. A political problem is being resolved militarily by treating it as a logistical problem.

> There are many examples across the world of politics trumping humanitarian assistance even if it means starving millions to achieve political or military goals

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said recently in Rafah, "From this crossing, we see the heartbreak and heartlessness of it all. A long line of blocked relief trucks on one side of the gates, the long shadow of starvation on the other... it is a moral outrage." Stopping humanitarian aid is a serious violation of international law. It also violates the interim order of the International Court of Justice for ensuring "effective and immediate" aid to Gaza. Now, Palestinians wait for a pier.

In a significant, if much belated, development on March 25, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution calling for "an immediate ceasefire for Ramadan ... leading to a lasting sustainable ceasefire" but also ensuring the release of hostages and humanitarian access. The U.S. abstained on the vote. However, as the French Ambassador to the UN warned, the crisis is not over and that "after Ramadan, which ends in two weeks, it will have to establish a permanent ceasefire".

But first, will Israel respect the resolution and observe a ceasefire at all? And allow humanitarian aid? Israel is in no mood to do so. For Hamas to agree to return Israeli hostages, both dead and alive, they want Palestinian prisoners in exchange. The fear is that after that exchange, and after Ramadan, Israel will be free to resume the war – this time as a fight to the finish where Hamas will hold no cards to negotiate for peace. The U.S. has backtracked by dubbing the resolution as "non-binding" and giving Israel a free hand to continue its bombing. And, politics triumphs. Not even a UN Security Council resolution can get humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in Gaza.

When India sent aid

Using humanitarian aid for political ends in conflicts is as old as diplomacy itself. In a rare occurrence, we have had a State government in India provide humanitarian aid to a country. In 2008, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam under Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi of Tamil Nadu sent 80,000 'family packets' of food and clothes to the thousands of displaced Sri Lankan Tamil civilians, who the retreating Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam used as a human shield.

This was the DMK's political message, both to Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, that it cared for Sri Lankan Tamils. To ensure that these packets reached Tamils behind the LTTE's frontlines, the Government of India (the DMK was a coalition partner at that time), requested the International Committee of the Red Cross to distribute them. In 2022, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (and Karunanidhi's son), M.K. Stalin, did one better and sent nearly 10,000 tonnes of food and medical aid to Sri Lanka during that country's economic crisis.

During COVID-19, even as vaccines were hoarded by the West, India sent vaccines to over 100 countries and showed compassion in diplomacy, demonstrating that not everything is hostage to realpolitik.

The case of Afghanistan

In fact, when India was in UNSC (2021-2022), it has on numerous instances been witness to aid being used as a political weapon. For example, due to pressure from the P-5 (the five permanent members of the UNSC) and others to establish political relations with the Taliban, in December 2021, the UNSC agreed to open-ended humanitarian aid to Taliban, even without any progress on benchmarks set out in Council resolution, especially on the status of women. After two years, with aid freely flowing to the Taliban, the status of Afghan women has only deteriorated. But the world now has Ukraine and Gaza on its hands and would rather forget the women of Afghanistan.

The UNSC has also witnessed politics trump humanitarian aid be it in Syria, Ethiopia, Yemen and elsewhere, placing innocent civilians in great distress. In Syria, since the U.S., Turkey and western and Gulf backers failed to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, they now play politics with aid by stationing their troops in northern Syria and regulating aid only to Syrians under their control through their checkpoints. This was the case in Yemen. In Ethiopia, since the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was backed by the West, humanitarian aid was used as a tool to subject the Ethiopian government to political pressure. It is now the turn of Sudan. Nearly 25 million Sudanese, including 14 million children, wait for elusive external aid as internal conflict rages on and barely 5% of estimated funding requirement has been met so far.

And so, around the world, people wait patiently for food and medicine, amid fights and leaders paying scant regard to their fate.

WTO's investment facilitation negotiations are not illegal

Prabhash Ranjan

teaches at the Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University

One of the significant developments at the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Abu Dhabi was the non-adoption of the agreement on investment facilitation for development (IFD). Despite opposition from countries such as India, negotiations for an IFD agreement at the WTO were launched in 2017 on a plurilateral basis by 70 countries. This was done through a process known as the Joint Statement Initiative. The IFD agreement was finalised in November 2023. Today, around 120 of 166 WTO member countries (more than 70% of the membership) back the IFD agreement. This agreement aims to create legally binding provisions to facilitate investment flows.

In Abu Dhabi, these 120 countries wanted to include the IFD Agreement as a plurilateral agreement (PA) within Annex 4 of the WTO Agreement. It is critical to recall that while the WTO is a multilateral trade organisation, Article II.3 of the WTO Agreement categorically allows for PAs. These PAs bind those WTO member countries that accept them and do not create rights or impose obligations on the remaining members.

India's concerns

The IFD Agreement, among other things, will require states to augment regulatory transparency, and streamline administrative procedures to bolster foreign investment inflows. Importantly, this agreement does not contain provisions on market access, investment protection, and investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS). ISDS, which allows foreign investors to bring treaty claims against the state admitting investment, has been a contentious issue in recent years. Given the existing structure of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, where only states can bring legal claims against other states, it is implausible that ISDS can be a part of it.

India and South Africa played a crucial role in not letting the IFD agreement become a part of the WTO rulebook. India does not seem to be exceedingly concerned about the text of the IFD agreement. Instead, India's principal concerns are twofold. First, the question of whether investment can be part of the WTO. And second, the process followed to make the IFD agreement a part of the WTO rulebook.

> India should reconsider its defensive approach towards plurilateral agreements such as the investment facilitation for development agreement

Investment is not trade

On whether investment can be part of the WTO, India's chief contention is that investment *per se* is not trade. In other words, investment could or could not result in cross-border trade. This argument flies in the face of economic literature supporting an inextricable linkage between trade and investment. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, about 70% of international trade occurs through global value chains, which are characterised by trade and investment, thus proving the close relationship between the two.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that several modern-day free trade agreements, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership include detailed investment provisions covering both facilitation and protection. Interestingly, India's newly minted trade agreement with the European Free Trade Association also contains provisions on investment, though it is restricted to facilitation and promotion measures.

Regarding the process followed in negotiating the IFD Agreement, India's foremost assertion is that there is no mandate to conduct negotiations on investment. India argued that in 2004, the WTO's General Council decided that the talks on the relationship between trade and investment – one of the so-called 'Singapore issues' because it was introduced at the 1996 WTO Singapore ministerial conference – would not take place as part of the Doha round of negotiations launched in 2001.

India also referred to the decision taken at the 2015 WTO Nairobi ministerial decision, which says that "any decision to launch negotiations multilaterally on [new] issues would need to be agreed by all members". Since all countries never agreed to launch negotiations on an IFD Agreement, according to India, IFD negotiations and the subsequent text that came up for adoption are illegal.

India is correct in arguing that there is a negative mandate to launch negotiations on the relationship between trade and investment. But two questions arise. First, does this negative mandate cover all aspects of investment, including facilitation? It is important to recall that the dropped investment agreement proposed at the 1996 Singapore ministerial focused on issues such as market access and investment protection. So, can the negative mandate include everything and anything on investment at the WTO?

Second, the negative mandate is to launch negotiations on new issues multilaterally. Will this also apply to negotiations launched on a plurilateral basis? The negotiations on an IFD agreement were launched not on a multilateral basis. While Article X.9 of the WTO Agreement states that the decision to add an agreement to the existing set of PAs listed in Annex 4 can be made 'exclusively by consensus', nothing in the agreement requires consensus to launch negotiations for a PA.

An essential function of the WTO is to update existing rules and make new ones to govern the increasingly complex nature of international trade. However, the WTO's decision-making process remains deadlocked because of the colossal difficulties in arriving at consensus. From this perspective, PAs such as the IFD agreement are essential for reinvigorating the WTO's stalemated legislative function. India, which will soon be the third biggest economy, should reconsider its defensive approach towards PAs, as in the proposed IFD Agreement in the WTO.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Employment scenario

The India Employment Report 2024 that says unemployment among youth has increased from around 35.2% in 2000 to 66% in 2024 reveals the hollow promises of all governments. Political leaders/parties have hoodwinked people especially the youth. The much-lauded programmes with fancy names that are often talked about by the government at the Centre have done very little in terms of creating employment opportunities. The youth of India should be alert and diligent in casting their votes in the general election.

M.C. Vijay,
Chennai

As a professor teaching in a college in Thiruvananthapuram which offers 12 under-graduate and seven post-graduate courses in diverse subjects, I must confess that the number of students who would come to my office and offer sweets and seek one's blessings after getting a job has drastically reduced. Another index of a decline in job openings in both the formal and informal sector is by just going through the daily newspapers on Wednesday. Till a few years ago, the advertisement for job vacancies covered about four to six pages, and sometimes these pages were detached and sold by newspaper vendors at a premium price, for which there was a mad scramble among job seekers. The number of pages is down to one, half, or quarter of a page.

Dr. Biju C. Mathew,
Thiruvananthapuram

Ceasefire resolution

The UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza sends out a clear message: Israel is overdoing the retribution. Through the resolution process, the world sends out a message that violence does not lead to peace and security, but to endless cycles of violence and humanitarian disaster. Countries need to impress upon Benjamin Netanyahu that the smart and right thing to do is to refrain from attacking Rafah. While a two-state solution seems difficult at the moment, it is the only solution for peace.

N. Sadhasiva Reddy,
Bengaluru

State of the media

Capitalist millionaires now own chunks of the media. Having sunk large sums into the lucrative business, they are busy ensuring that it is their writ that runs across the newsroom. The dominant coverage to the ruling government especially when it concerns the visual media is one such example Pre-election surveys in the form of opinion polls which present a totally one-sided picture predicting victory for the ruling dispensation 'here, there and everywhere' too could also be a huge public relations exercise ("SC raises concern over the rich gagging the media", March 27).

C.V. Aravind,
Bengaluru

Corrections & Clarifications

The reference in a front-page story titled "Sensing China threat, India joins race to mine new sea patch" (March 27, 2024) to the presence of AN Seamount, a structural feature off India's coast, at an oceanic depth of 4,800 km should be corrected to read 4,800 metre.

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Preventing a China-Taiwan conflict

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With expanding national interests, India has stronger compulsions to act against far-off hazards. India finds its interests entangled in disputes on the far edges of Asia, including in Taiwan. China claims Taiwan as its own, and is feverishly preparing to seize the island by force if necessary, while the U.S. has increasingly clearly signaled that it would probably fight to defend Taiwan. India is highly unlikely to fight in a conflict over Taiwan. It has vital economic and security interests, and valuable policy levers, to ensure that such a conflict never happens.

Maintain the status quo

New Delhi has three main reasons to do so. First, it has a stake in the status quo, with Taiwan as a self-governing territory that does not declare independence. India and Taiwan have expanded trade seven-fold since 2001 and are exploring a possible free trade agreement. The Taiwanese firm, Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation, has partnered with the Tata Group to build India's first semiconductor fabrication plant. An agreement was signed recently to send Indian workers to Taiwan. India's industry, critical supply chains, and overseas population are all increasingly invested in an enduring peaceful status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

Second, any Chinese aggression against Taiwan would be catastrophically costly for India. Such a scenario would, in effect, cripple global trade with China and Taiwan, which would create disruptions throughout Asia and West Asia. A recent Bloomberg study estimates that the costs of a conflict would amount to over 10% of global GDP. India's economy would suffer a greater shock than the U.S. economy and its most valuable sectors, from electronics to pharmaceuticals, would run dry of components and materials.

A protracted or general war between China and the U.S., spreading beyond Taiwan, could spill over in multiple directions. It could ignite the already tense India-China land border. It could wipe out or take offline sizeable portions of Chinese, American, and other regional countries' industrial capacity, on which the world depends. And it could raise the risk of unthinkable nuclear escalation. A conflict over Taiwan is something that India simply cannot afford, especially as it seeks stability and growth for national development.

Third, while a conflict itself would be calamitous, its outcomes could further worsen India's long-term international position, depending on which side prevails. A limited conflict, where China has relative advantages of concentrating force near Taiwan, is also the most likely scenario to end in a Chinese victory over Taiwan and a corresponding defeat of the U.S. and its allies. If China, through the crucible of battle, thereby displaces the U.S. as the region's pre-eminent military power, it would undermine the region's entire security architecture. American security guarantees would be less credible, neighbours may seek to assure their security with more arms or offensive postures, and China's military would be free to further project unchecked influence, including into the Indian Ocean. It may even feel emboldened to press its claims on Arunachal Pradesh. India is not an American ally, but it does depend on the U.S. for its military modernisation and a broadly benign strategic environment.

What India can do

What, then, can India do to help prevent this calamity? Beijing's strategy for Taiwan uses all instruments of national power, from international law to economic and political leverage, aside from military coercion. It would doubtless prefer to pursue less costly and disruptive non-military ways as long as they remain viable. Given the stakes involved, it would only resort to a military campaign once it is satisfied that it has adequately set the conditions for victory. The military balance across the Taiwan Strait will therefore be the most critical deterrent, but non-belligerent states like India can buttress deterrence by convincing Beijing that it has not adequately set the conditions.

India has six types of policy options at its fingertips: international law arguments; building narratives opposed to aggression; coordinated diplomatic messaging; economic de-risking; active information operations to support the Taiwanese people; and military support to the U.S. forces in the Indian Ocean. Each option can be calibrated to variable levels of ambition and political appetite; and they can be adapted and applied by many other countries.

These options can also advance India's grand strategic position, regardless of their impact on the China-Taiwan dispute. Enacting these policies would, first and foremost, lend India more leverage in its intensifying strategic competition with China. They also offer additional pathways for India to deepen its cooperation with the U.S., thereby accelerating its national rise. And they offer a wider agenda for Indian international leadership, especially among countries of the Global South, which otherwise would be passive or at best uncoordinated in deterring Chinese aggression more broadly.

Such policies, therefore, are not a favour to Taiwan or the U.S.; they would be an act of Indian self-interest. Depending on the political context, they may invite Chinese retaliation, but no policy is cost-free, and India has recently shown a tough willingness to weather Chinese opprobrium when necessary. India's expanding interests and ambitions suggest the need for different policy settings, and the costs of such policies would be dwarfed by the costs of doing nothing.

India needs to enact tougher policies to serve its own interests

Telangana's fiscal challenge

The government is facing an arduous task in fulfilling its six guarantees

STATE OF PLAY

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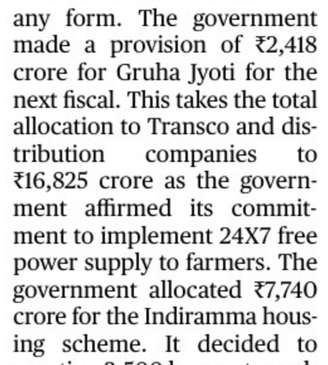


The Telangana government is facing an arduous task in fulfilling the six guarantees that the Congress promised before being voted to power, thanks to the slow pace of growth in revenue receipts.

The government has been struggling to raise resources for meeting its immediate commitments including payment of salaries, pensions, and interests. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the fact that close to half the revenue receipts are being spent on these three heads alone, according to the provisional figures released by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

While tax revenue for the current fiscal is projected at ₹1.52 lakh crore in the budget estimates, expenditure on account of salaries/wages (₹38,627 crore), pensions (₹13,024 crore), and interest payments (₹22,407 crore) account for ₹74,058 crore. This is in addition to subsidies, which amount to ₹12,958 crore. The CAG figures show that the State's overall revenue receipts at the end of February stood at ₹1.51 lakh crore, 70.16% of ₹2.16 lakh crore of the budget estimates, with just a month left for the conclusion of the financial year.

In this backdrop, the implementation of the six guarantees is likely to be a Herculean task for the new government. The guarantees announced in the run-up to the Assembly elections include free bus travel for women across the State, enhancement of health coverage under YSR Aarogya Sri from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, supply of LPG cylinder at ₹500, free power up to 200 units to eligible households under the Gruha Jyoti scheme, houses to the poor under the Indiramma scheme, and a sustenance allowance for women.

The State started implementing free bus travel for which it needs to reimburse more than ₹300 crore a month to the State Road Transport Corporation. It has started enhancing the health coverage limit as well. The government made a provision of ₹53,196 crore in the ₹2.75 lakh crore vote-on-account budget for 2024-25, for the implementation of the six guarantees. The budget saw no hikes in taxes and duties in any form. The government made a provision of ₹2,418 crore for Gruha Jyoti for the next fiscal. This takes the total allocation to Transco and distribution companies to ₹16,825 crore as the government affirmed its commitment to implement 24X7 free power supply to farmers. The government allocated ₹7,740 crore for the Indiramma housing scheme. It decided to sanction 3,500 houses to each of the 119 Assembly constituencies in the State. The actual burden on the exchequer on account of implementation of the six guarantees is yet to be ascertained.

Though the government is keen to implement its guarantees, the mismatch in the budget estimates and the actual estimates over consecutive years raises doubts over the availability of the resources towards this end. The overall revenue receipts till February end remained ₹1.51 lakh crore against the ₹2.16 lakh crore projected in 2023-24. Of this, ₹41,448 crore was in the form of borrowings and other liabilities.

Another area where excess projection is leading to shortfall in the actuals is grants in aid and contributions from the Central government. While the government estimated ₹41,259 crore revenue under the head for the fiscal, the actual realisation till the end of February remained at just ₹6,955 crore.

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka admitted that the gap between the estimates and actuals for the current fiscal could be as high as ₹70,000 crore. Substantiating his claim is the huge difference between the budget estimates and actuals at the end of February.

Coupled with these are the restrictions imposed by the Union Finance Ministry on the State's market borrowings citing financial management. But these have been relaxed to some extent after Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Mr. Bhatti Vikramarka met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in January.

The State needs to explore new avenues to augment its resources and not just depend on revenue through excise and sale land parcels. In addition, it should also focus on areas where there are said to be leakages. These cause dents to the government revenue and need to be fixed so that Telangana can can deal with challenges on the financial front.

2024 records hottest-ever January and February

In February 2024, the average global temperature was 13.54°C, the warmest-ever for any February

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

This year's February was the hottest February ever. So was this year's January. This is in continuation of a streak: the last seven months of 2023 also marked record highs for those months. Records have been set and broken in successive years, which means that the world is heating up.

Not only are temperatures rising, but they are also rising at a faster rate than ever before. The gap between the record temperatures set in 2023 and 2024 and the old records from previous years which were broken are considerably wide, showing that the rise in temperature is rapid.

Chart 1 shows the monthly average global surface temperatures by year. The numbers 1 to 12 on the horizontal axis represent the months of the year, from 1 for January to 12 for December. For clarity, the year 2020 and the subsequent years are highlighted in red.

In February 2024, the average temperature was 13.54°C, the warmest ever for any February. The previous record was set in 2016 when the average temperature touched 13.42°C. That record broke the previous record of 13.33°C, set in 2020.

In January 2024, the average temperature was 13.14°C, again the warmest ever for any January. The previous record was set in 2020 when it touched 13.02°C. That broke the previous record of 12.99°C, which was set in 2016.

Map 2 shows the country-wise average monthly surface temperature as on February 15, 2024. South Sudan in east Africa, and Ghana and Togo in west Africa, crossed the 30°C mark, which makes them the hottest countries on that date. In 62 countries, the average temperature on that day was over 25°C. In 41 countries, including India, it was over 20°C. India's average temperature on that day was 20.17 °C.

While in terms of the global average, this year witnessed the hottest February, the same is not true for all the individual countries. For instance, of the 194 countries depicted on the map, only 58 witnessed their hottest February in 2024. These include many countries in Europe such as Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland. India's hottest-ever February was recorded in 2006, when the average temperature was 21.94°C.

Chart 3 shows the monthly surface temperature deviations by year. While the absolute temperatures in a month are depicted in Chart 1, the deviation from a specific month's average surface temperature from the 1991- 2020 mean is depicted in Chart 3.

In February 2024, the deviation was +0.81°C. That is, the temperature that month was 0.81°C above the 1991-2020 average for February. This is the highest deviation ever recorded for a February. In January 2024, the deviation was +0.70°C, again the highest deviation ever recorded for a January.

Map 4 shows the country-wise monthly surface temperature deviations compared to the 1991-2020 mean, as on February 15, 2024. The deviation was over +2°C in most of Europe and northern America. Some parts of Africa and South America too recorded a similar high deviation on that date, while India's was +0.3°C.

According to the Copernicus monthly bulletin, European temperatures in February 2024 were 3.3°C above the 1991-2020 average for February, with higher above-average temperatures experienced in central and eastern Europe.

Outside Europe, temperatures were above average over northern Siberia, central and north-west North America, most of South America, across Africa, and in western Australia.

Breaking temperature records

The data for the charts were sourced from Our World in Data and Copernicus Climate Change Service

Bone dry: Cattle grazing on the dried bed of Kerala's longest river Bharathapuzha near Ottapalam, Palakkad. KK MUSTAFAH

Chart 1: The chart shows the monthly average global surface temperatures by year. The numbers 1 to 12 on the horizontal axis represent the months of the year. The last nine months have been the warmest on record

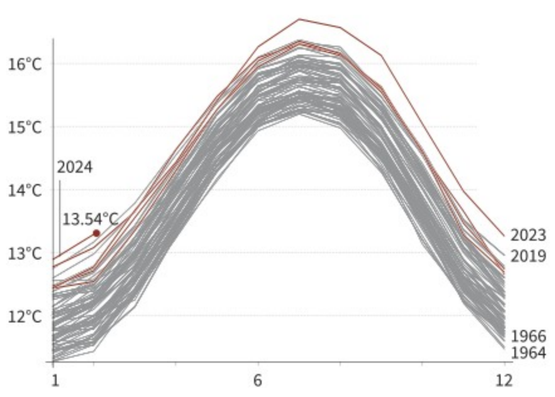
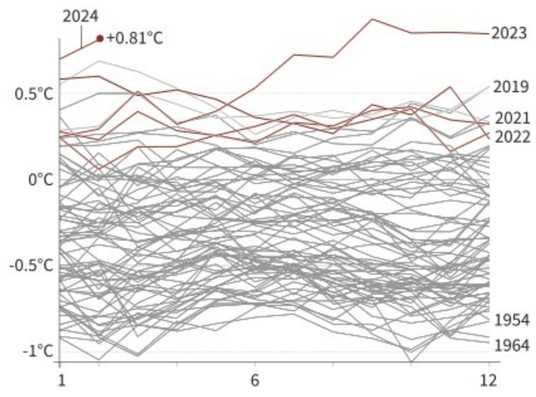
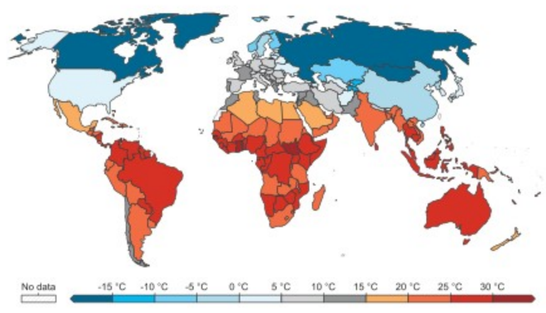


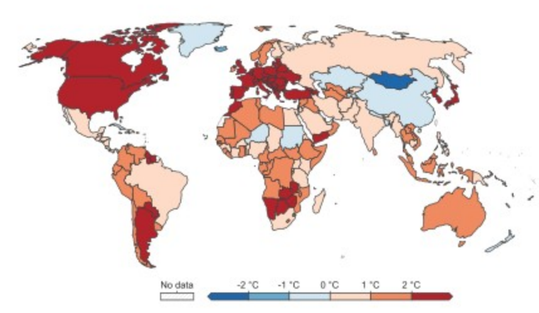
Chart 3: The chart shows the monthly surface temperature deviations by year, that is, the deviation of a specific month's average surface temperature from the 1991–2020 mean. In February 2024, the deviation was +0.81°C



Map 2: The map shows the country-wise average monthly surface temperature as on February 15, 2024. In 62 countries, the average temperature on that day was over 25°C. In 41 countries, it was over 20°C



Map 4: The map shows the country-wise monthly surface temperature deviations compared to the 1991-2020 mean as on February 15, 2024. The deviation was over +2°C in most of Europe and northern America



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 28, 1974

Minister rules out nationalisation of more industries

New Delhi, March 27: The Industrial Development Minister, Mr. C. Subramaniam, to-day ruled out further nationalisation of industries for the present.

Replying to the debate on the budget demands for his Ministry in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Subramaniam said the first task now was to have stable conditions in the industries already in the public sector. "The trouble starts" as soon as any industry was nationalised.

Mr. Subramaniam ridiculed the leftist demand for the immediate nationalisation of the larger industrial houses.

Unless conditions were created in the public sector projects to make them run smoothly, there was no point in further nationalisation.

Mr. Subramaniam said that the very people who were advocating the cause were playing politics in public sector projects.

Repudiating the charge by a CPM member that the Government had "shamelessly retreated" from its industrial policy vis-a-vis big industrial houses, Mr. Subramaniam said even in restricted areas earmarked for the larger houses, medium entrepreneurs were given preference to the former. The larger houses were allowed only to "fill in gaps" in production targets.

He said many top level executives had been giving up posts in the private sector and joining public enterprises. With proper men at the top, the whole situation in some of the public undertakings had dramatically changed.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 28, 1924

Case against Marconis

London, March 26: At the King's Bench Division today in the action brought by James A. Malcolm against Marconi's wireless telegraph company for commission in connection with the proposed wireless telegraph supplies for China, Justice Anton gave judgment. Defendants have succeeded with costs contingent upon their payment to the plaintiff of a commission on 66 thousand £sterling when received from the Chinese government.

From Page One

'Priest can give CAA eligibility certificate'

The CAA facilitates citizenship to undocumented people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014. It fast tracks the citizenship process by reducing the eligibility requirement for such applicants to five years of continuous stay in India instead of the usual 12 years.

Certificates from local mandirs

According to Dharamveer Solanki, 44, around 100 Pakistani Hindus living in the Majnu ka Tila area of north Delhi have registered on the portal so far.

"Some of us got the eligibility certificate from the Arya Samaj mandir and some from the Shiv Mandir nearby. We are waiting for the documents to be processed," said Mr. Solanki, who came to India with his family in 2013.

In-person verification

According to the CAA Rules, after the documents have been uploaded, the applications will be sifted by a district-level committee headed by the Superintendent of the Department of Post.

The applicant will have to visit this committee on the appointed day when the documents will be verified in person.

Mr. Solanki said he was yet to get a call from the committee.

The final decision on applications will then be taken by the empowered committee headed by the Director (Census Operations) in each State.

India objects to remarks by U.S. on Delhi CM arrest

"We encourage a fair, transparent, and timely legal process for Chief Minister Kejriwal," the spokesperson had said.

"India's legal processes are based on an independent judiciary which is committed to objective and timely outcomes. Casting aspersions on that is unwarranted," the Ministry said on Wednesday.

Gloria Berbena, the U.S.'s Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, was also summoned to a 40-minute meet at the South Block on Wednesday to convey the protest officially, according to sources.

Despite New Delhi's stern summons, the U.S. government repeated its concerns at its briefing in Washington on Wednesday, saying the U.S. "continues to follow" the Union government's actions in the run-up to the election, including Mr. Kejriwal's arrest. "We are also aware of the Congress party's allegations that tax authorities have frozen some of their bank accounts in a manner that will make it challenging to effectively campaign in the upcoming election," U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

"We encourage fair, transparent and timely legal processes for each of these issues... We don't think anyone should object to that," he added in the comments that came in response to a journalist who cited a report by Amnesty International.

EC issues notices to Shrinate, Ghosh

The poll body said the comments also violated its advisory to parties to maintain dignity during electioneering. Both leaders have been asked to respond to the showcause notices by the evening of March 29.

The EC reminded the two leaders of the provision of the MCC which states that criticism of other political parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programme and past record and work. "Low level personal attacks to insult the rivals shall not be made. The political parties and candidates to refrain from any deeds/action/utterances that may be construed as being repugnant to the honour and dignity of women," the Commission said, also warning against social media posts vilifying and insulting rivals.

Money looted from poor in Bengal to be returned: PM

Modi speaks to BJP's Krishnanagar candidate Amrita Roy, who is pitted against Mahua Moitra; Trinamool leadership objects to PM's remarks, calls it a violation of the Model Code of Conduct

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said he was exploring legal options to ensure that nearly ₹3,000 crore allegedly "looted" from poor people in West Bengal and attached by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was returned to them.

Mr. Modi made these remarks while speaking to the BJP's candidate from Krishnanagar, Amrita Roy, over telephone.

"In a phone call with Rajmata Amrita Roy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he is exploring legal options to ensure that the money looted from the poor goes back to them through whatever assets and money ED has attached from the corrupt," a BJP leader said.

In the conversation, Mr. Modi told the BJP candidate to tell people about the conversation she had with him.

Election spirits: BJP supporters wear masks of the PM during a public meeting ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha election. PTI

Expressing hope that the people of the State would vote for his party Mr. Modi said, "On one hand, BJP is committed to uprooting corruption in the country and on the other hand, all the corrupt have come together to save each other."

Model Code violation

The Trinamool Congress leadership objected to the remarks of the Prime Minister and said that the proposal to return money to the people was a violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy said the Prime Minister cannot announce any policy decisions when the Model Code of Conduct was in place.

The Trinamool leader also added that the Prime Minister was commenting on cases which were *sub judice*.

Ms. Roy, who hails from the Nadia Royal family, is pitted against Mahua Moitra of the Trinamool Congress.

This is the second occasion that Mr. Modi has dialled a BJP candidate from West Bengal.

On Tuesday, he spoke to Rekha Patra, the party's candidate from Basirhat, and called her a symbol of Shakti. Ms. Patra hails from Sandeshkhali.

Amid reports that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had summoned Ms. Moitra, the Trinamool Congress leadership came to her defence and said that these summons were part of a political vendetta.

"First they expelled her from Parliament without giving her a fair chance and now agencies are issuing summons to her. Mahua will win elections whatever tricks the BJP might try," Trinamool Congress spokesperson Sukhendu Sekhar Ray said.

J&K parties respond cautiously to Shah's remarks on AFSPA

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's broad hints at the Centre's readiness to revoke the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from Jammu and Kashmir evoked cautious and guarded reactions from regional parties in the Union Territory.

Mr. Shah, in an interview to news outlet *Gulistan News*, suggested that his government would consider revoking the AFSPA. "The government has already drawn a road map for the withdrawal of troops and that the process will be initiated after elections," Mr. Shah said.

National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah termed Mr. Shah's remarks "specious".

"The way people of Ladakh have been cheated over the restoration of Statehood and Sixth Schedule, Mr. Shah is repeating it in J&K. If New Delhi thinks everything is normal in J&K, even militancy and separatism are over, then it's high time to remove AFSPA and withdraw troops... There should be no need to wait further".

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said her party had been consistently demanding the revocation of the "draconian AFSPA" along with a gradual removal of troops.

"It also formulated an important part of our Agenda of Alliance wholeheartedly agreed upon by BJP. *Der aayee durust aaye*. Better late than never but only if it isn't *jumlebaazi* like generating two crore jobs every year or empty promises of depositing 15 lakhs into bank accounts...," Ms. Mufti said.

She said the Union government should walk the talk "by releasing journalists and thousands of young Kashmiri boys currently languishing in jails without any charges or prosecution".

The AFSPA has been an emotional issue in Kashmir, against the backdrop of allegations by civilians that it was being "misused".

Bail condition limiting political involvement violates rights, says SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said judges should not order accused persons to surrender their right to be politically active in return for bail.

A three-judge Bench led by Justice B.R. Gavai, in a recent order, said to compel a person to stay away from politics by making his or her bail conditional on that is a plain violation of fundamental rights.

The apex court clarified the point in a petition filed by a former Mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation. The man in question, Siba Shankar Das, was granted bail in a criminal case in 2022. One of the grounds laid down by the Orissa High Court was that he should "not create any untoward situation in public or be involved in any political activities, directly or indirectly".

Mr. Das had moved the High Court to modify this bail condition, saying he wanted to participate in the political activities ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. In January, the High Court refused his plea. Following this, he moved the apex court.

HC decision quashed

"We find that the imposition of such a condition would breach the fundamental rights of the appellant [Das] and no such conditions could have been imposed. We, therefore, quash and set aside the condition imposed by the High Court," the three-judge Bench headed by Justice Gavai held.

The High Court, in January, had declined to modify the bail condition on the ground that Mr. Das's involvement in politics was a danger to himself. The Court recounted instances when death came dangerously close to him.

"He [Das] is always under a life threat and lifting of the condition, at this juncture, shall in all probability put the administration to enough difficulties," the Court had reasoned.

The State government had argued that not only were murderous attempts made on Mr. Das, but he had himself been involved in new cases. The State had alleged that he was involved in 57 cases.

Shiv Sena (UBT) releases first list of 17 candidates; sparks strong criticism from Cong.

Abhinay Deshpande
MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena (UBT), a partner in the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), on Wednesday released its first list of 17 candidates from Maharashtra for the upcoming Lok Sabha election.

The naming of candidates for Sangli and Mumbai South-Central seats sparked strong criticism from the Congress, a coalition partner, which said that talks were still on to finalise a seat-sharing formula. Maharashtra has 48 Lok Sabha seats.

Congress leaders said the MVA partners must stick to the "coalition dharma" and asked the Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena to reconsider its decision. "Announcing candidates while discussions are still on is an insult to 'Aghadi dharma'," Congress leaders Balasaheb Thorat and Vijay Wadettiwar said.

Mr. Thorat said their party was firm on contesting from Sangli, Bhiwandi, and Mumbai's South-Central.

Congress MLA Vishwajeet Kadam meets K.C. Venugopal.

Mumbai Congress Committee chief and Dalit leader Varsha Gaikwad, who was looking to contest from the South-Central constituency, said the Sena (UBT) should not have unilaterally announced candidates for those two seats, where consensus among the allies had not yet been reached. "We have expressed our displeasure with our party leaders and will take further steps as directed...," the Dharavi MLA said.

Congress MLA Vishwajeet Kadam met All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal in New Delhi, urging the party to nominate Vishal Patil, the grandson of former Chief Minister Vasantdada Patil, for the Sangli Lok Sabha seat. Mr. Kadam also met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

Key sources told *The Hindu* that the grand old party was firm on fielding Mr. Vishal Patil from Sangli and Ms. Gaikwad from Mumbai South-Central, even if the Sena (UBT) fails to reconsider its decision.

The Sena (UBT) fielded wrestler Chandrahar Patil from Sangli and Rajya Sabha MP Anil Desai from the South-Central seats.

The list of candidates includes former Union Ministers Anant Geete from the Raigad constituency and Arvind Sawant from the South Mumbai constituency. The party has also reaffirmed the nomination of all five MPs who stayed loyal to its leader and former CM Uddhav Thackeray following the 2022 split. Additionally, the Uddhav-led Sena has chosen its youth wing leader, Amol Kirtikar, to contest from the Mumbai North-West seat, currently represented by his father, Gajanan Kirtikar, who has since aligned with the Shiv Sena faction led by Eknath Shinde.

Govt. notifies revised wages under the MGNREGS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday notified the revised wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), with States reporting a hike in wages by eight to 10%.

The hike ranged from ₹7 in Uttar Pradesh (from ₹230 in 2023 to ₹237 in 2024) to ₹34 in Goa (from ₹322 to to ₹356). Significant jumps in wages have been reported by Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Goa, where the hikes varied from 8% to 10.5%. Bihar follows behind, where the wages have been revised by ₹17.

Haryana continues to offer the best wages at ₹374 per day, and Uttar Pradesh at ₹237 has one of the lowest wages. The revised rates will be applicable from April 1. The Union Rural Development Ministry had to seek permission from the Election Commission to issue the notification. There are a total of 14.34 crore active workers.

Delhi HC refuses to interfere with Arvind Kejriwal's arrest by ED

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to immediately interfere with the remand of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy. Instead, his petition for interim relief will be considered along with his main petition, the court said.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma issued notice to the ED on Mr. Kejriwal's petition challenging his arrest on March 21 and subsequent remand to the agency on March 22 till March 28. While posting the case for hearing on April 3, the judge said that to reach a conclusion as to whether the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor was entitled to immediate release or not, she would "necessarily have to decide the issues raised in the main petition".

In his main petition, Mr. Kejriwal has three pleas: to declare the arrest as illegal; to quash the remand order; and to release him from custody.

"This Court is further of the opinion that the present petition raises several issues of legality and validity regarding the arrest and remand of the petitioner," the judge said.

The court rejected the contention of senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing Mr. Kejriwal, that no reply was required to be filed on behalf of the ED.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, appearing for the Central agency, said that the "bulky" petition was served upon them only on Tuesday, and three weeks' time should be given to bring their stand on record.

Meanwhile, at a public event on Wednesday, Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena said, "I can assure the people of Delhi that the government will not be run from jail."

BJD's first list sets up high-profile electoral battles

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Wednesday released its first list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, revealing high-profile political contests ahead.

The BJD has announced candidates for 15 out of 21 Lok Sabha seats, and 72 out of 147 Assembly seats in Odisha.

Pranab Prakash Das, the BJD's organisational secretary, the second-most influential position in the party after the president, is the BJD's candidate for the Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat.

The BJP has fielded Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan as its candidate for the same seat. With Mr. Pradhan returning to contest direct elections in Odisha after a 15-year hiatus, he is likely to face formidable opposition, especially since the regional party has elevated the stakes by nominating Mr. Das, turning the contest into a matter of prestige.

Naveen Patnaik

At present, the Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat is held by the BJP, but the MP, Nitish Gangadeb, has drawn flak for reported non-performance. Sambalpur is a BJP stronghold. Of the seven Assembly seats falling under the Sambalpur Lok Sabha constituency, in 2019, the BJP won three seats.

Mr. Pradhan had previously represented the erstwhile Deogarh Lok Sabha constituency from 2004 to 2009. Mr. Das, on the other hand, hails from the Jajpur district and does not have experience in fighting a direct election from the Sambalpur and Deogarh districts.

Political observers here hold the view that the BJD will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that its organisational superiority gives Mr. Pradhan a run for his money.

The Sundargarh Lok Sabha constituency is also poised for an engaging political showdown as the former captain of the Indian hockey team and head of Hockey India, Dilip Tirkey, prepares to contest against BJP stalwart and former Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram.

Previously representing the BJD in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Tirkey's candidacy holds significance, particularly given his Christian background. The minority community has a sizeable population in Sundargarh. The party is optimistic about leveraging this demographic factor to its advantage.

Similarly, the BJD has fielded debutant Manmath Routray as the Lok Sabha candidate from the Bhubaneswar seat against the BJP's national spokesperson Aparajita Sarangi. Incidentally, Mr. Routray, son of veteran Congress leader and Jatni MLA Suresh Routray, joined the regional party on Wednesday. The Jatni Assembly constituency falls under the jurisdiction of Bhubaneswar.

The regional party has named Arup Patnaik, former Mumbai Police Commissioner, as its Puri Lok Sabha candidate.

The BJD has announced that the BJP national vice-president Baijyant Panda will face Ansuman Mohanty, who recently joined the BJD. Mr. Panda has won the Kendrapara Lok Sabha seat twice.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will contest from the Hinjili Assembly constituency, a seat he has held for five consecutive times.

Congress names 14 candidates in fresh list

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday brought out a fresh list of 14 candidates from Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh for the Lok Sabha election.

Some of these names were cleared by the Central Election Committee (CEC) of the party earlier in the evening. Sources said the CEC had discussed around 18 names and most had been cleared.

In Uttar Pradesh, the party named Dolly Sharma from Ghaziabad, Virendra Chowdhury from Maharajganj, Nakul Dubey from Sitapur, and Shivram Valmiki from Bulandshahr.

The party is said to have cleared Ujjwal Raman Singh, a former Minister in Akhilesh Yadav government and son of Samajwadi Party leader Rewati Raman Singh, for the Prayagraj Lok Sabha seat.

In Madhya Pradesh, the party has fielded Rao Yadvendra Singh against Jyotiraditya Scindia in Guna.

In Jharkhand, it has fielded J.P. Patel from Hazaribagh, Sukhdeo Bhagat from Lohardagga, and Kalicharan Munda from Khunti. The name for Ranchi seat has been put on hold.

Joblessness is the defining issue of Lok Sabha election, says Congress

Congress says it has a concrete plan to tackle unemployment, which will be revealed in its poll manifesto; PM promised 20 crore jobs in 10 years, but has snatched 12 crore jobs from youth, says Kharge; wages have declined since 2012, says Ramesh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge along with Sonia Gandhi and K.C. Venugopal during a party meeting on Wednesday. ANI

The Congress on Wednesday claimed that India was sitting on a "ticking bomb" of joblessness and asserted that unemployment would be the defining issue of the upcoming Lok Sabha election despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attempt to "distort, distract and divert" from it.

From Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, several Congress leaders asserted that their party had a concrete plan to deal with unemployment. They were speaking a day after Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran said it was incorrect to think that government intervention could solve every social and economic challenge, such as unemployment.

Citing the India Employment Report-2024, released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD), Mr. Kharge said that before casting their votes, people should remember that the Prime Minister had "promised to provide 20 crore jobs in 10 years but snatched more than 12 crore jobs from the youth".

'Ticking bomb'

"Our youth are bearing the brunt of Modi government's pathetic apathy, as ever-rising unemployment has destroyed their future. ILO & IHD Report conclusively says that the unemployment problem is grim in India. They are conservative, we are sitting on a 'ticking bomb' of joblessness!" the Congress chief said in a post on X. "But the Modi government's Chief Economic Adviser protects the dear leader, by saying 'government can't solve all social, economic problems such as unemployment'," he added.

The ILO report said that 83% of jobless Indians were youth and only 17.5% of the youth in rural areas were engaged in regular work, Mr. Kharge said. "Share of people employed in industry and manufacturing has remained the same since 2012 at 26% of the total workforce. The percentage of youth involved in economic activities decreased from 42% in 2012 to 37% by 2022," he said, quoting from the report. Compared to 2012, youth unemployment had tripled under the Modi government, he claimed, adding, "That is why the Congress has brought in Yuva Nyay or justice for youth." The Congress chief reiterated the party's promises to fill up nearly 30 lakh vacant Union government posts, to enact a law on the right to apprenticeship for degree, diploma holders that will offer a stipend of ₹1 lakh per year, and to ensure social security for gig economy workers, among others.

'Concrete plan'

On X, Mr. Chidambaram claimed that the Chief Economic Adviser had made a "shocking" statement about the government not being able to solve the problem of unemployment.

"If that is the official stand of the BJP government, we must boldly tell the BJP 'Vacate your seat. The Congress has a concrete plan to tackle the issue of unemployment and it will be revealed in its Manifesto'," Mr. Chidambaram said.

In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the India Employment Report 2024 presented "some extremely concerning" facts on the country's labour market over the past 10 years.

"Each year, around 70-80 lakh youth are added to the labour force, but between 2012 and 2019, there was almost zero growth in employment – just 0.01%! In 2022, unemployment was very high among the urban youth (17.2%) as well as rural youth (10.6%)," Mr. Ramesh said, adding that the unemployment rate among women in urban areas was extremely high at 21.6%.

Mr. Ramesh said nearly one in three youth with graduate degrees (29.1%) was unemployed and only 20% of the 1,25,000 establishments registered on the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme portal actually offered apprenticeships. He added that real wages of regular workers had declined between 2012 and 2022, inflation was uncontrolled, and workers could now afford less than what they could 10 years ago.

RJD, Congress on verge of finalising seat-sharing formula

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Akhilesh Prasad Singh

The seat-sharing talks between the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) are headed towards resolution, and an announcement is likely on Thursday.

According to the sources, the RJD has agreed to concede nine Lok Sabha seats in Bihar to the Congress, excluding Purnia, which the latter wanted for Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, who merged his Jan Adhikar Party recently with the Congress. In an exchange, the RJD is likely to concede Katihar to the Congress.

Confirming the positive development, Congress State president Akhilesh Prasad Singh said, "We have finalised a seat-sharing formula, and an announcement will be made soon."

Meeting in capital

RJD leader and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav has been in the capital for the past few days to sort out the differences.

The Katihar Lok Sabha seat is another seat where the two INDIA bloc allies are at loggerheads. The RJD wants it for its former Rajya Sabha MP Ashfaq Karim while Congress leader Tariq Anwar is a contender. The latter had won the seat in 2014 but lost in 2019 even though he garnered nearly five lakh votes.

Th RJD's offer of nine seats leaves the Congress with the headache of dealing with five-term MP Pappu Yadav, who was brought on board with the promise that he would be fielded from Purnia. The RJD has already named Bima Bharati, who had switched from the Janata Dal (United), as its nominee for the seat.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Pappu Yadav insisted that he will not abandon Purnia seat. "I will not change my decision. Every mother and every daughter of Purnia see me as their son and brother. I can leave this world but not Purnia," he said.

Don't have the kind of money to contest LS polls, says Nirmala

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Nirmala Sitharaman

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has decided against contesting the Lok Sabha election, she said on Wednesday, citing the lack of "money to contest" the election and her inability to meet the "winnability criteria" in southern States such as Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu that she could have considered battling from.

The Minister, in her second term in the Rajya Sabha, had been sounded out by the Bharatiya Janata Party's top brass to consider a Lok Sabha candidature in the election, along with some of her Upper House Cabinet colleagues such as Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Environment and Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav.

'Winnability criteria'

Responding to a query on whether she would contest the election, Ms. Sitharaman said: "No. The party did ask me but after thinking about it for a week or 10 days, I said maybe not... My party president did ask me, 'Would you like to contest from somewhere in the South? The option is Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh'."

"But I don't have that kind of money to contest. I also have a problem, because whether it's Andhra or Tamil Nadu, it's also going to be a question of various other winnability criteria that they use – are you from this community, are you from this religion ... I said, 'No, I don't think I am going to be able to do it'," she said, at an event hosted by Times Now.

"The party was graceful enough – and I am very grateful – to accept my arguments, and say: '*Chalo*, you won't. It's alright.' So I am not contesting," said the Minister, whose current Rajya Sabha tenure will end in June 2028.

Drama in Moradabad as Akhilesh bows to Azam's choice

Anuj Kumar
GHAZIABAD

The last day of nomination for the first phase of Lok Sabha election saw dramatic flip-flops in Moradabad and Rampur Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttar Pradesh as fissures in the Samajwadi Party (SP) came out in the open.

In a bid to placate senior party leader Azam Khan, the party leadership made his confidante, Ruchi Vira, its official candidate in Moradabad, leaving its MP, S.T. Hasan, in the cold. On Tuesday, Dr. Hasan had filed his nomination. The news of the sudden shift led to a ruckus in the local unit and Dr. Hasan's supporters burnt effigies of Ms. Vira.

After the district magistrate declared Ms. Vira as the official candidate, Dr. Hasan told reporters that he filed his nomination after being given the party symbol. "I am surprised because if I were not worthy I would not have got it in the first place. There must be some compulsions but will stand by the High Command's decision," he said.

Hailing from an influential Vaishya family of Bijnor, Ms. Vira was an SP MLA from the Bijnor seat from 2014-2017, before shifting to the BSP for some time. She returned to the SP fold after being expelled by Mayawati for anti-party activities. She is the daughter-in-law of the late Dharam Vira, former Cabinet Secretary and Governor of Mysore, West Bengal and Punjab.

Sources close to Dr. Hasan held Mr. Khan responsible for the change and

A file photo of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav with party leader Azam Khan. PTI

charged him for not allowing a vibrant Muslim leadership in the party. "Everybody knows his nature but the high command has to cede to his demand because of public perception. It seems Khan *sahib* was feeling insecure by Doctor *sahib's* rise in the Muslim community and wanted to cut him to size. It became apparent during the local body polls," said a member of his team.

The situation turned amusing in Rampur where as many as three probables from the party ranks filed the nomination, indicating a clear divide in the local unit. First, Maulana Mohibullah Nadvi, the Imam of New Delhi's Parliament Street mosque, who claimed to have the symbol, rushed to file his nomination without any visible local support. After that, Asim Raja, a close acolyte of Mr. Khan, turned up to file the nomination with the district president and followers in tow. Towards the end of the day, former municipal corporation president Abdul Salam, who is also said to be close to Mr. Khan, ran in to file the nomination with five supporters. Party spokesperson Abdul Hafiz Gandhi confirmed that State party president Naresh Uttam Patel took the symbol of Mr. Nadvi by a chartered flight. "The other two will be considered as Independents," he said.

The developments were triggered after Mr. Yadav visited Mr. Khan last week in the Sitapur jail where he is lodged after being convicted in the fake birth certificate case of his son. Sources said Mr. Khan wanted Mr. Yadav to contest from Rampur and field Ms. Vira from Moradabad.

Mr. Raja told *The Hindu* that he filed the nomination as per the direction of his leader. "Azam *sahib* is the tallest leader in the party. We had asked Akhilesh *ji* to contest from Rampur but he expressed his inability. It doesn't look good but in politics, such things happen," he said.

Political analyst Suryamani Gupta said the SP would have been better placed if it had fielded Ms. Vira from Bijnor, her home base that also has a substantial Muslim population. "A practising physician, Dr. Hasan is a popular figure and the decision to replace him will cause resentment among Muslims."

AAP MP joins BJP in Punjab

In a major setback to the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab in the run-up to the parliamentary election, its lone Lok Sabha MP Sushil Kumar Rinku and a party legislator Sheetal Angural on Wednesday joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

IndianOil
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Research & Development Centre, Faridabad
NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST(EOI)
IOCL intends to install Pretreating unit for Sustainable feedstock like Used Cooking Oil (UCO) / Tree Borne Oil (TBO) / Non-edible oil/ Tallow. An EOI is floated in IOCL website. The pretreatment facility includes the process sequence Clarification (Chloride Mitigation), Polyethylene removal, Degumming, and Adsorption. All experienced venders are requested to participate in the EOI. Last date for participation in EOI is **23/04/2024**. For further details kindly refer the Tender ID: **2024_IOCL_751525_1** in following given weblink **(https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app)**

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(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
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NOTICE
"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. **www.coalindia.in** /respective Subsidiary Company (CMPDI, **www.cmpdi.co.in**), CIL e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in.** In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal **https://gem.gov.in**"

LOOK OUT NOTICE

Above Photo is accused in crime 1491/2023 U/s. 379, 511 IPC of Sakthikulangara Police Station. He attempted to commit theft of sandal wood from Kavanad on 03.12.2023. After committing the above said offence the accused absconded. If any information is received in connection with the above accused person, please contact the numbers given below.
Station House Officer, Sakthikulangara : 9497947131
SI of Police, Sakthikulangara : 9495347291
Sakthikulangara Police Station : 0474 2770966
131/F2/2024/I&PRD

NOTICE-2
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR,
UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) TRIBUNAL,
ROOM NO. 15, GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK 'A', DELHI HIGH COURT, NEW DELHI-110503
RE: Notification No. S.O. 354 (E) dated 29th January, 2024 Issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, under Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, declaring the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as an Unlawful Association.
To,
Students Islamic Movement of India
WHEREAS the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") has declared Students Islamic Movement of India (for Short 'SIMI') to be an "Unlawful Association" vide Notification No. S.O. 354 (E) dated 29th January, 2024 [published in the Gazette of India: Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii)].
AND WHEREAS by Gazette Notification No. S.O. 722 (E) dated 16th February, 2024 [published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii)], in exercise of powers under sub-section (1) of Section 5 read with sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the Act, the Central Government has constituted a Tribunal comprising Hon'ble Mr. Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav, Judge of the High Court of Delhi, for adjudicating as to whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as an "Unlawful Association" as required by sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the said Act.
NOW THEREFORE, a notice is hereby given under sub-section (2) of Section 4 of the Act and you are hereby called upon to show cause, within 30 days from the date of service of notice, as to why Association, declared as unlawful, be not adjudicated to be so and why an order confirming such declaration be not made under Section 4(3) of the Act.
The objections/reply affidavits, if any, may be filed/delivered, before the next date of hearing of the Tribunal, to the undersigned at his office in Room No. 15, Ground Floor, 'A' Block, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi- 110503. In case the objections / reply and documents are in regional language, true English Translation thereof be also attached.
You may appear through a duly authorized person before the Tribunal on **09.04.2024** at **04:30 pm** in Court Room No. 16, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi-110503 for further proceedings.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, High Court of Delhi, New Delhi this the 29th February, 2024.
(Jitendra Pratap Singh)
Registrar,
Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal
Delhi High Court Building
Sher Shah Road, New Delhi
SEAL
DIPR/C/3306/2024

BJP appoints election officials for States and Union Territories

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday appointed its Lok Sabha poll in-charges and co-incharges for several States and Union Territories, drafting in quite a few leaders who did not get ticket to fight the elections.

Bihar MLA Nitin Nabin will be in-charge for Chhattisgarh and Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Sharma for Maharashtra, a party statement said.

Bihar MLA Sanjeev Chaurasia, Ramesh Bidhuri and Sanjay Bhatia were named as co-incharges for Uttar Pradesh.

Haryana leaders O.P. Dhankar and Captain Abhimanyu have been made in-charges for Delhi and Assam respectively. Former Karnataka BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel will be co-incharge for Kerala.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND TWO NON-JUDICIAL MEMBERS OF TAMIL NADU LOKAYUKTA
Applications are invited for the posts of **Chairman and Two Non-Judicial Members of the Tamil Nadu Lokayukta**. Qualified and interested persons may send their application in the prescribed format along with relevant particulars / documents by Speed Post or Registered Post so as to reach the Chairperson at the address given below on or **before 5.00 p.m., Tuesday, 30th April, 2024**.
Address:
Hon'ble Justice G.M.Akbar Ali (Retd.),
Chairperson of the Search Committee,
Second Floor, Catholic Centre,
No.108, Armenian Street, Parrys, Chennai-600001.
Application form can be downloaded from the website:
https://www.tn.gov.in/announcements/dept_list/22
Chairperson
Search Committee
DIPR/425/Display/2024

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INBRIEF

Court convicts Sanjiv Bhatt in 1996 drug planting case

A court in Gujarat on Wednesday convicted former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt in a drugs seizure case dating back to 1996. The court is expected to pronounce the quantum of punishment on Thursday. The sessions court in Palanpur held Bhatt guilty of falsely implicating a Rajasthan-based lawyer, Sumer Singh Rajpurohit, by claiming that police had seized drugs from a hotel room where the lawyer was staying. However, the Rajasthan Police later said Mr. Rajpurohit was falsely implicated by the Banaskantha police to compel him to settle a property dispute.

Assets worth ₹82 cr. attached in Parabolic Drugs Ltd. case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets, including 24 immovable properties worth ₹82.12 crore, in connection with the alleged bank fraud case involving Parabolic Drugs Limited, its directors and others. "These attached properties are relatable to the Proceeds of Crime (PoC) as acquired by Pranav Gupta, Vineet Gupta, Chartered Accountant Surjeet Kumar Bansal, and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act," the agency said on Wednesday. The ED's probe is based on a First Information Report (FIR) registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 1988 against Parabolic Drugs Ltd., its promoter-directors and others.

Three held for false social media posts in Kashmir

The J&K Police arrested three locals on Wednesday for creating "fake accounts" and "misleading locals" in the Kashmir valley. A police spokesman said Sameer Ahmed Paray from , was arrested for allegedly "uploading a false post on his fake Facebook account". The accused, police said, uploaded a photo depicting arms and ammunition, with a claim that a local youth from Pulwama had joined the militancy. In a separate case, the police arrested two persons for "misuse of social media" from north Kashmir's Baramulla. The police said the accused, Irfan Ahmad Bhat and a juvenile from Baramulla, were deceiving netizens online.

Woman beaten up, stripped in M.P. village; 4 women held

Four women were arrested for allegedly beating up, stripping, and parading a 30-year-old woman over a dispute at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district, police said on Wednesday. A video of the purported incident that occurred during the Holi celebrations also surfaced on social media. "On Monday, four women forcibly pulled the victim out of her house, beat her up and humiliated her by stripping her naked in public at Bachhora village of Gautampura police station area," Superintendent of Police (Rural) Sunil Mehta said. All four accused were later arrested, he said. Eyewitnesses said that the victim kept pleading for mercy at the time of the incident, but the accused did not relent. PTI

Somali pirates used an Iranian fishing vessel to hijack *MV Ruen*

Al Ashkaan, which had 24 Pakistani crew members, was hijacked on Nov. 29 off the coast of Yemen; it would go on to be the mother ship used by pirates to hijack a Malta-flagged merchant vessel that was finally intercepted by the Indian Navy

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Naval operation: *MV Ruen* during a rescue operation by the Indian Navy and, right, the Somali pirates brought to Mumbai for hand over to the police on March 23. @INDIANNAVY/X, EMMANUAL YOGINI

New details that have come to light reveal that the pirate mother ship that was used to hijack Malta-flagged merchant vessel *MV Ruen* on December 14 was itself an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel *Al Ashkaan* with 24 Pakistani crew members.

Al Ashkaan was hijacked earlier on November 29, 2023, near Socotra Island off the coast of Yemen and used for the subsequent act of piracy, as confirmed by at least two sources.

"Fishing vessel *Al Ashkaan* was hijacked by seven Somali pirates and taken to Somalia and later used to hijack *Ruen*. After that they set free *Al Ashkaan*, which asked other Iranian fishing vessels for fuel and supplies," an official source said.

Continuous watch

The pirates had kept continuous watch and were very aggressive with hijacked crew members, a source added. The hijackers had first diverted *Al Ashkaan* to Mozart Pirates Camp in Somalia, where two more armed pirates had boarded the vessel.

MV Ruen was hijacked on December 14, 2023, when it was 600 Nm east off the Somalian coast. Subsequently, it sailed out of Somalian waters for further acts of piracy on the high seas when it was intercepted by *INS Kolkata* on March 14. After a 40-hour operation, the Indian Navy forced the surrender of 35 pirates and freed the 17 original crew members of the vessel. An Indian Air Force (IAF) C-17 transport aircraft airdropped marine commandos and combat boats as part of the mission, which was executed 2,600 km away from the Indian coast.

On March 23, the 35 pirates were brought to Mumbai and handed to the police for prosecution.

The Navy stated that after repairs and assessment, *MV Ruen* – with its Malta-flag restored – had proceeded on its own power to the port of Salalah, Oman as decided by the shipping company, with the escort of *INS Subhadra*.

The sequence of events that occurred were revealed after Italian ship *ITS Martinengo* operating under CTF 465 of the EU NAVFOR Ops ATLANTA (Operation Atlanta, European Union Naval Force Somalia) conducted a compliance boarding of the fishing vessel on February 27 and questioned the captain and crew.

The Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) which monitors maritime activity listed the hijacking of the fishing vessel.

There was communication on this incident between NAVCENT (United States Naval Forces Central Command) in Bahrain and the Director of Naval Operations of the Pakistan Navy.

Crew, vessel safe

Sources added that the *Al Ashkaan* crew intended to continue fishing in the vicinity of Socotra Island till the end of Ramzan and, thereafter, proceed to Iran. They have four barrels of fuel available and each barrel can last up to 10 days, the source added.

Six Naxalites killed in an encounter in Chhattisgarh

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR

"At least six alleged Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur on Wednesday morning ," the police said.

"The deceased include two women cadres and there is a possibility of more Maoists getting injured," the police added. "The gunfight took place in the forest areas of Chikurbhatti and Pusbaka villages under Basaguda police station area, when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-naxal operation," according to Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) P. Sundarraj.

A police statement added that the personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Central Reserve Police Force, and its elite unit CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) were involved in the operation. Later the police purportedly recovered the bodies and a large quantity of arms and ammunition. The search operation is still under way.

So far in 2023, nearly three dozen Maoists have been killed.

'India achieves 16% decline in new TB cases since 2015'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's efforts to ensure early tuberculosis detection and treatment initiation, along with a host of community engagement efforts has resulted in a decline of 16% in incidence (new TB cases emerging each year) and a 18% reduction in mortality, since 2015.

The incidence rate in India had fallen from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 199 per lakh population in 2022, while the mortality rate had declined from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 23 per lakh population in 2022, according to the India TB report 2024 released by the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday, stating that the country has set 2025 as the target for eliminating the disease.

Additionally, of all the TB cases notified in 2023, nearly 32% of notifications came from the private health care sector which is an increase of 17% from the previous year. According to the data released in the report, while the overall notification of TB cases has improved by over 50% in the last nine years on an annual basis, Uttar Pradesh saw the highest jump in notifications (by 21% compared to the previous year).

The Centre added that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) embarked on a journey towards accelerating TB elimination, guided by the National Strategic Plan 2017-25.

"The NTEP continued providing free diagnostic services, conducting approximately 1.89 crore sputum smear test," noted the report.

ICMR set to bring in evidence-based norms for lung cancer management

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Currently, evidence-based guidelines do not exist with respect to prevention, screening, diagnosis, management, and palliation of lung cancer in India, despite the fact that lung cancer is one of the commonest cancers in India accounting for 10% of total cancer deaths in the country.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), understanding this gap, is now all set to launch a systematic review and meta-analyses which, it notes, will play a crucial role in synthesising existing evidence to inform decision-making in the management of lung cancer to guide clinical practice and improve patient outcomes.

The Council has launched an expression of interest (EoI) from researchers who are interested in conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Currently, evidence-based guidelines do not exist with respect to prevention, screening, and diagnosis of lung cancer. ISTOCKPHOTO

"Prospective applicants will be tasked to conduct systematic reviews/meta-analysis pertaining to the identified review questions (PICOs) and assessing the quality of evidence using Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation (GRADE) tool," the ICMR said, adding that the process of generating such evidence would entail the compilation of systematic reviews from the existing literature, focusing on well-defined review questions.

Grading methodology

"Additionally, the evidence derived from these systematic reviews and meta-analyses will be systematically assessed for its strength utilising the GRADE. This grading methodology will serve to evaluate the quality of evidence, which will subsequently inform the formulation of recommendations following the application of the Evidence to Decision (EtD) framework," noted the ICMR.

The Council also said that depending on the scope of the review, a team might be assigned more than one review question, including prevention, screening, diagnosis etc.

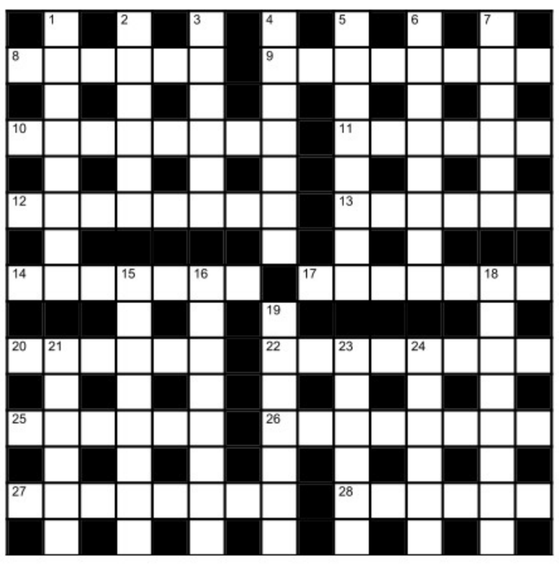
According to the World Health Organisation, lung cancer is a significant public health concern, causing a considerable number of deaths globally. Smoking tobacco (including cigarettes, cigars, and pipes) is the primary risk factor for lung cancer, but it can also affect non-smokers. Other risk factors include exposure to second-hand smoke, etc.

CROSSWORD + 14134

(set by Hypatia)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Skilful American surgeon starts to operate in theatre (6)
9 Shift and say nothing to intimate friend (5,3)
10 Harry - old, loyal and crazy (8)
11 Burning daughter's saved by hero struggling with time (3-3)
12 Sanctions loud speeches after conflict (8)
13 Can exercise beginning from dumbbells be repeated (6)
14 Small animal's a sweet runner, per Spooner (7)
17 Building used if Iceland's quarantined (7)
20 Drink helping king out (6)
22 Say, front runners in party helped the US from time to time (8)
25 Walks after small breaks (6)
26 Dispose of fish food (8)
27 King Khan essentially in Jamnagar, after dancing leaves grand function finally (8)
28 Request going through to obtain seal (6)

Down

1 After developing Covid, Australia had deported one champion (8)
2 Parliamentarian's hugged by that woman - a big mistake! (6)
3 Last to work with current leader (6)
4 Initially cinema adapted plays with no music (7)
5 Surprised that pioneer went ahead (8)
6 Rated in exchange (5-3)
7 Discount offer on gigantic reflecting screens (6)
15 Actor in a blue mackintosh (8)
16 One can't remember when a man is carelessly swallowing ecstasy and cocaine (8)
18 Detergent or a bit of soap in clothes basically getting thinner (8)
19 Accessory seen in Zurich and Baghdad (7)
21 Frequently poor, possibly has almost nothing, basically! (6)
23 Recognition in controlling *Dadagiri,* essentially (6)
24 Lines disconnected by Telco's first volunteer (6)

SUDOKU

		6		2	5		9	8
5		3			9	4		
			6				3	
				6		8		
2	9						4	7
		8		7				
	3				6			
		5	2			3		4
6	8		7	5		9		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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Solution to previous puzzle

S	H	A	M	P	O	O	C	H
T	M	R	R	O	L	I	E	
A	L	I	M	O	N	Y	M	A
L	S	J	X	M	A	H	T	
L	E	S	S	E	E	G	A	R
R	O	T	T	E	C	W	N	C
R	A	R	G	O	T	R	I	D
I	C	U	L	E	D	U	O	O
O	E	A	U	A	T	O	L	E
R	A	N	C	E	L	O	B	B
Y	O	D	G	R	C	F	A	C
T	O	I	D	S	J	U	N	G
L	E	O	O	K	O	D	L	R
N	C	H	A	P	A	T	I	A
V	A	T	A	R	S	U	S	P
N	I	T	F	U	S	E	T	T
I	N	G	S	H	E	A	T	H
E								

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	2	5	7	1	6	8	9	4
4	8	7	3	9	5	6	1	2
9	6	1	2	4	8	7	5	3
1	7	9	8	3	2	5	4	6
6	4	3	5	7	1	9	2	8
8	5	2	9	6	4	3	7	1
5	1	4	6	8	9	2	3	7
7	9	8	4	2	3	1	6	5
2	3	6	1	5	7	4	8	9

FAITH

Dasaratha: reining in senses

The mind is like a war zone and controlling it entirely is key to finding God. When one is constantly agitated, internally, how can one find peace? It is imperative that one masters one's senses, stay immune to sensory temptations that pop up practically everyday in worldly life and achieve complete self control. Once such a state is achieved, the Lord will reside as pure bliss within us, said Swami Mitranandaji.

The best example of such mastery is Dasaratha. Only a person who rises above the ten senses is known as a Dasarathi. Rath means a chariot and Dasaratha is one who has the supreme ability to rein in his senses. Despite hailing from an illustrious lineage and ruling over a vast empire, Dasaratha remained inherently detached from materialistic possessions; nor did he indulge in pleasures from such a state. On the contrary, he was focused on performing his duties, rule justly and maintain peace and harmony over the vast kingdom. When such a person is at the helm, prosperity follows forthwith.

Why was Ayodhya, his capital, so celebrated? The term literally means 'no conflict.' When we tame our minds and achieve complete self-control, we achieve a free (mental) state such as the prosperous and peaceful Ayodhya under Dasaratha.

INBRIEF

Dr. Reddy's to market Sanofi's vaccines in India

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said it has received exclusive rights to promote and distribute Sanofi's seven paediatric and adult vaccine brands in private markets in India. Hexaxim, Pentaxim, Tetraxim, Menactra, FluQuadri, Adacel and Avaxim 80U had a combined sales of about ₹426 crore (about $51 million), Dr. Reddy's said, citing IQVIA MAT February 2024 numbers. These will be a significant addition to top-line sales revenue from April 2024, the company said.

SLMG Beverages appoints Costin Mandrea as CEO

SLMG Beverages, the largest independent bottler of Coca-Cola in India, has appointed Costin Mandrea as its CEO. With more than 25 years of experience in the beverage industry, Mr. Mandrea has held key leadership positions in the Coca-Cola Bottling System in Western and Central Europe, Russia, and Japan. "I look forward to collaborating with the talented team and leveraging my experience to drive innovation and growth for the company," Mr. Mandrea said.

Housing sales hit decadal high in top 7 cities: Anarock

Quarterly housing sales has reached an all-time decadal high with approximately 1,30,170 units sold in the Jan-March quarter of 2024 in the top seven cities, according to data released by Anarock, a real estate consulting group. This is a 14% yearly rise against about 1,13,775 units sold in the same period last year, it said. Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune accounted for more than 51% of the total sales in the top seven cities, Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock said.

'Drop in FDI mirrors global trend'

Net FDI inflow into India dropped 31% during the first 10 months of 2023-24; the Finance Ministry, however, argues that gross FDI dipped just slightly from $61.7 bn. to $59.5 bn. and that the decline in net FDI was only due to repatriation of funds

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The decline in India's net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, which had dropped almost 31% to $25.5 billion over the first 10 months of 2023-24, was in line with the slowdown in such investments to developing countries, the Finance Ministry has said, while holding out hope for an uptick in investments in this calendar year.

While overall global FDI flows rose 3% to an estimated $1.4 trillion in 2023, economic uncertainty and higher interest rates did affect global investment, reflected in FDI flows to developing countries falling by 9%, the Ministry said in its February review of the economy's performance.

"Mirroring the slowdown in FDI flows to developing countries, gross FDI inflows to India also dipped but only slightly in the period April 2023-January 2024 [from $61.7 bn. to $59.5 bn.]. In net terms, the comparable figures were $25.5 bn. vs. $36.8 bn. The contraction in net inflows was more due to an increase in repatriation; the contraction in gross inflows is negligible," the Ministry noted.

While a modest increase in global FDI flows is likely this calendar year, thanks to a decline in inflation and borrowing costs in major markets which may stabilise financing conditions for international investment, there are still significant risks, the Ministry said. These risks include geopolitical risks, high debt levels accumulated in many countries, and concerns about further global economic fracturing, it said.

Citing an UNCTAD report, the Ministry said that despite the drop in FDI inflows, the country witnessed "a stable number of new project announcements" keeping it in the top 5 destinations for global greenfield projects. The Netherlands, Singapore, Japan, the U.S.A. and Mauritius account for about 70% of the total FDI equity inflows into India, the Ministry added.

Slowing flows

Finance Ministry holds out hope for an uptick in investments this year even as FDI inflows witness a decline

- While overall global FDI flows rose 3% to an estimated $1.4 trillion in 2023, flows to developing countries fell by 9%
- Despite drop in FDI inflows, India saw a stable number of new project announcements
- Modest rise in global flows likely in 2024, thanks to a dip in inflation, borrowing costs

Government to borrow 53.1% of FY25 target in H1

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday announced it will borrow more than 53% of its budgeted gross market borrowings of ₹14.13 lakh crore for 2024-25 in the first half.

Of the ₹7.5 lakh crore planned to be raised between April and September, about ₹12,000 crore would be through Sovereign Green Bonds. While more than a quarter of this will be through 10-year bonds, the Finance Ministry will introduce a new 15-year bond that will be used to raise over ₹1.04 lakh crore.

RBI modifies norms for lenders having exposure to AIFs

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has modified norms for regulated entities (REs) concerning their investments in Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).

As per the fresh directive, REs need to only set aside provisions to the extent their investment in an AIF scheme is further invested by the AIFs in a debtor's company, and not the entire investment in the AIF scheme.

"With a view to ensuring uniformity in implementation among the REs, and to address the concerns flagged in various representations received from stakeholders, it is advised that downstream investments shall exclude investments in equity shares of the debtor company of the RE, but shall include all other investments, including investment in hybrid instruments," the RBI said on Wednesday.

"Provisioning shall be required only to the extent of investment by the RE in the AIF scheme which is further invested by the AIF in the debtor company, and not on the entire investment of the RE in the AIF scheme," it added.

Investments by REs in AIFs through intermediaries such as fund of funds or mutual funds are not included in the scope of the circular. The RBI had in December prevented REs from making investments in AIFs having downstream investments either directly or indirectly in any debtor's company of the REs. This was to stop the evergreening of loans.

RBI's MPC to meet April 3-5 for first review of 2024-25

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday released the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting calendar for the financial year 2024-25, with the first policy review of the new fiscal set for April 3-5.

The dates for the fiscal year's subsequent meetings are: June 5-7, 2024; August 6-8, 2024; October 7-9, 2024; December 4-6, 2024 and February 5-7, 2025, the RBI said in a release. The MPC last met on February 6-8, when it kept key interest rates unchanged.

Federal Bank opens 29 new branches, eyes credit growth

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Shyam Srinivasan

Federal Bank Ltd. on Wednesday opened 29 branches, 26 in Tamil Nadu alone, to increase its business potential, said a top banker.

"We ended last year with 200 branches in TN. Now, it is 250, of which 26 were opened today. This is the first time that we are opening so many branches in a single state," said CEO Shyam Srinivasan.

These branches will focus on providing gold and kissan loans, SME loans and taking deposits. Retail, agri and MSME accounts for 56% of the bank's credit portfolio, while TN fetches 10% of its total business.

"We are not only strengthening our presence in TN, Karnataka, Andhra and Telangana, but also in the north and east. While the west and north have potential for corporate lending, south is known for commercial banking and SME loans," he said.

Asked about the economical viability of the new branches, Mr. Srinivasan said 80-90 branches that were opened in Tamil Nadu in the last 18 months have already broken even.

'SBI, Bajaj Auto part of 25 stocks eligible for same-day settlement'

Reuters
BENGALURU

India's Bajaj Auto , Bharat Petroleum and State Bank of India are among 25 stocks eligible for optional same-day settlement starting from March 28, the BSE said on Wednesday.

Indian markets operate on a T+1 settlement cycle for all stocks currently, which means that the purchase and sale of shares will reflect in the demat accounts of investors one day after the transaction.

The new T+0 settlement cycle reduces transactional risks and enhances market efficiency by providing immediate liquidity to investors, said analysts at ICICI Direct. Implementing this could also result in increased trading opportunities and reduced settlement risks for investors, they added.

The T+0 settlement will be optional for 25 stocks and will be applicable only for trades executed between 9:15 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. IST, markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a circular on March 21.

'Will not be considered'

Prices in T+0 will not be considered for index calculation or computing settlement price, SEBI had said.

To avoid market distortions due to price discrepancies for shares trading in both settlement cycles, trading in T+0 cycle will be subject to a price band of 100 basis points above or below prices under the T+1 cycle, according to BSE.

Renault Nissan to develop four new models from Oragadam

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Luca de Meo

Renault Nissan Automotive India Pvt. Ltd., (RNAIPL) is planning to expand its product portfolio with the roll out of four new models from its Oragadam plant in the near future, said top company officials.

"It will be two C-segment Sport Utility Vehicle of five seater and seven seater developed parallelly for Renault and Nissan on the existing CMF-B platform with high level of localisation," Renault Group CEO Luca de Meo told said.

Renault Alliance Chairman Jean-Dominique Senard said India will continue to play a major role in the alliance. The alliance has invested $1.8 billion so far and recently it announced a further investment of $600-700 million.

"India is at the heart of the alliance and Tamil Nadu is chosen for its dynamism and the potential it offers. India has proved to be a crucial market for us," he said.

RNAIPL is a joint venture between Japan-based Nissan and France-headquartered Renault. Currently, the alliance retails five products in India with three under the Renault brand name (Kwid, Triber and Kiger) and two under Nissan badge (Sunny and Magnite).

The Oragadam plant produces 2.7 million cars per annum, of which 1.2 million units are shipped to over 100 countries. The cars have an indigenisation level of over 90%.

Deutsche Aircraft, Cyient partner for fuselage design

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Intelligent Engineering and Technology Solutions company Cyient and German original equipment manufacturer Deutsche Aircraft will collaborate on the detailed design for manufacturing (DFM) of the rear fuselage section for the 40-seater D328eco regional turboprop aircraft.

With an increased passenger capacity, the aircraft requires specific structural updates, Cyient and Deutsche Aircraft said on Wednesday.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	WEDNESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	72,996	0.73
US Dollar	83.33	-0.04
Gold	67,000	0.22
Brent oil	86.09	-0.50

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3122.10	12.15
Adani Ports	1322.80	18.60
Apollo Hosp	6231.45	-91.00
Asian Paints	2830.50	15.85
Axis Bank	1052.85	12.30
Bajaj Auto	9162.50	201.95
Bajaj Finserv	1582.65	-11.25
Bajaj Finance	7022.75	112.65
Bharti Airtel	1224.80	11.70
BPCL	595.20	-4.65
Britannia Ind	4920.20	-41.25
Cipla	1463.35	-8.90
Coal India	429.45	-6.50
Divis Lab	3367.85	-23.15
Dr Reddys Lab	6044.10	-90.75
Eicher Motors	3913.80	2.70
Grasim Ind	2207.35	-32.70
HCL Tech	1546.20	-16.05
HDFC Bank	1440.70	15.30
HDFC Life	626.35	-0.55
Hero MotoCorp	4572.55	-98.60
Hindalco	557.65	-1.00
Hind Unilever	2239.70	-0.30
ICICI Bank	1083.75	0.05
IndusInd Bank	1533.55	14.85
Infosys	1483.85	-8.80
ITC	428.00	0.35
JSW Steel	818.05	-3.85
Kotak Bank	1775.60	21.90
L&T	3706.40	36.30
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4927.50	-47.70
M&M	1881.15	17.20
Maruti Suzuki	12510.35	259.80
NestleIndia	2566.45	-19.65
NTPC	331.60	2.50
ONGC	261.75	-3.75
PowerGrid Corp	270.25	0.20
Reliance Ind	2985.70	102.55
SBI Life	1479.55	-6.85
State Bank	733.30	-6.75
Sun Pharma	1604.15	6.05
TataConsumerProduct	1091.05	-21.50
Tata Motors	978.65	-7.55
Tata Steel	152.70	0.30
TCS	3840.90	-36.60
Tech Mahindra	1253.80	-0.55
Titan	3759.40	61.20
UltraTech Cement	9623.45	22.75
UPL	455.50	-9.90
Wipro	472.30	-7.55

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on March 27

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.17	83.49
Euro	90.09	90.44
British Pound	105.07	105.48
Japanese Yen (100)	55.02	55.23
Chinese Yuan	11.51	11.56
Swiss Franc	91.83	92.19
Singapore Dollar	61.73	61.97
Canadian Dollar	61.18	61.42
Malaysian Ringitt	17.56	17.64
Australian Dollar	54.29	54.50

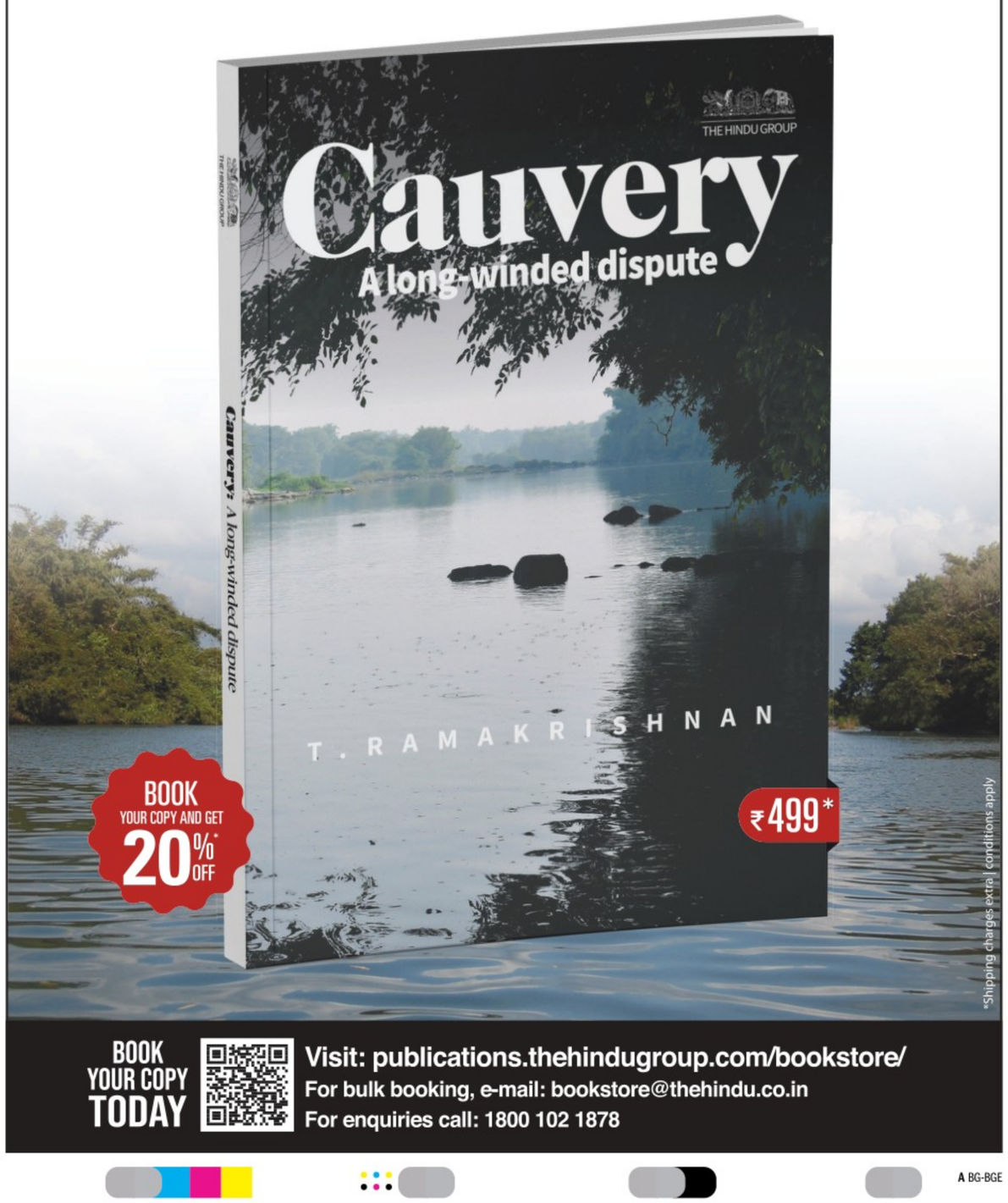
Source:Indian Bank

THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

RESOLVING A VEXATIOUS ISSUE

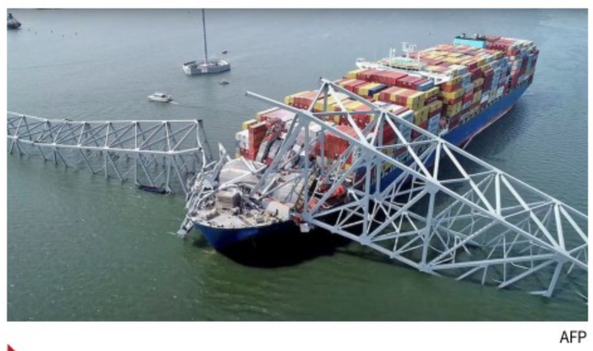
Finding a solution to the vexatious Cauvery dispute has been a challenge to even the collective wisdom of veteran politicians, seasoned policy makers, experts and farmers. It even tested the strength of India's federal structure at times. After bickering among riparian constituents of the Cauvery basin for over a century and exhausting all avenues, judiciary, finally, had to do the task of apportioning the quantum of water for each riparian party. This book gives an account of how the dispute evolved over the years, especially after the 1924 Agreement between Madras Presidency and the Princely State of Mysore. It also drives home the point that the last word has not yet been said on the issue. Apart from the subject of water sharing, the work discusses challenges facing the river on various fronts, including environment.



A BG-BGE

BALTIMORE

Search for six bodies in Baltimore bridge-ship collision continues



AFP

Emergency services combed the cold waters of Baltimore harbour on Wednesday in search of the bodies of six men — all reported to be Latin American immigrants — presumed killed when the giant cargo ship *Dali* slammed into the bridge at 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday when they working the night shift fixing potholes on the bridge. AFP

BANGKOK

Thailand's Lower House passes Bill on same-sex marriage

AFP

Thailand parliament passed a same-sex marriage Bill in a landslide on Wednesday, paving the way for the nation to become the first in Southeast Asia to recognise marriage equality. The Bill, passed with 399 to 10 votes in the Lower House, must be approved by the Senate and endorsed by the King before becoming law. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan high court judges allege intelligence agencies' interference

AFP

Six judges of the Islamabad High Court sought intervention by the Supreme Judicial Council against the alleged interference in the working of the judiciary by Pakistan's intelligence agencies. A letter from the judges demanded the SJC headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa initiate a judicial convention against such interference. PTI

GENEVA

UN official who filed report on Israel genocide complains of threat

AFP

Francesca Albanese, the UN expert who published a report saying there were reasonable grounds to believe Israel has committed genocide in Gaza during its military campaign against Hamas, said on Wednesday she had received threats throughout her mandate. She did not elaborate on the nature of the threats. REUTERS

China to develop Sri Lanka's deep sea port and airport

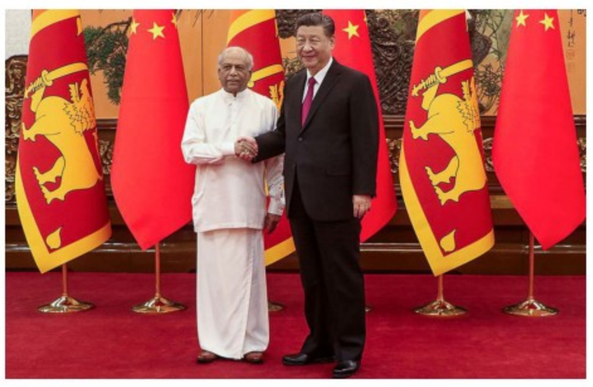
Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena holds talks with his Chinese counterpart; Beijing is the island nation's biggest bilateral creditor and will 'assist' Colombo's restructuring of external debt

Agence France-Presse
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister said on Wednesday that China has pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China – the island's biggest bilateral creditor – would "assist" Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a $2.9 billion IMF bailout.

Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates.



Timely ties: Sri Lanka Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Wednesday. AFP

Sri Lanka in 2022 ran out of foreign exchange to finance essential imports and declared a sovereign default on its $46 billion foreign debt. Months of protests forced then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa out of office.

Mr. Gunawardena's office said Premier Li Qiang had promised China would "assist Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process continuously and help Sri Lanka to develop its economy".

Mr. Gunawardena said Beijing had offered "assistance to develop" Colombo International Airport and Hambantota port, the statement added, without giving further details.

Japanese project halted

A Japanese-funded expansion of Colombo airport had been on hold since Sri Lanka's sovereign debt default.

The southern sea port of Hambantota was handed to a Chinese state-owned company in 2017 on a 99-year lease for $1.12 billion.

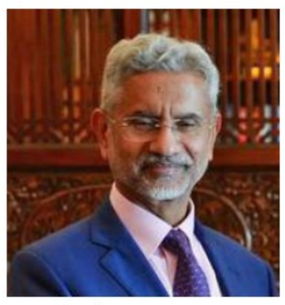
India and the U.S. are both concerned that a Chinese foothold at Hambantota, on the island's southern coast, could boost its naval advantage in the Indian Ocean.

Palestinians denied of homeland, India talks to Russia 'bluntly': Jaishankar

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on Wednesday said that a response to the conflict in Gaza has to acknowledge the fact that the Palestinian people were "denied the right to their homeland". Mr Jaishankar, who is on a visit to Malaysia, said that the challenge of foreign policy framing is to get the "balance right". He referred to the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine and said Indian interlocutors were used to "pass messages".

"On the one hand, what happened on October 7 was terrorism. On the other hand, nobody would countenance the death of innocent civilians. Countries may be justified in their own minds in responding, but every response must take into account something called international humanitarian law," Mr. Jaishankar said while interacting with the Indian community.



S. Jaishankar

"Whatever the rights and wrongs of the issue, there is the underlying issue of the rights of the Palestinians and the fact that they have been denied their homeland," he said.

In the backdrop of the conflict that intensified after the Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, Mr. Jaishankar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval have maintained dialogues with various stakeholders in West Asia as well as in eastern Europe. Mr. Jaishankar will host Foreign Minister of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba who is scheduled to arrive here later this week. He said that Indians have been talking to Russia "bluntly" and said, "Real life has a whole lot of complexities." During his visit to Singapore two days earlier, Mr. Jaishankar had referred to Russia-India relation as one marked by "positive relationship".

7 Lebanese, Israeli killed in exchange of fire on border

Associated Press
HEBBARIYE

An Israeli airstrike on a paramedics centre linked to a Lebanese Sunni Muslim group in south Lebanon killed seven of its members early on Wednesday and triggered a rocket attack from Lebanon that killed one person in northern Israel, officials said.

The strike on the village of Hebbariye came after a day of airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah group along the Lebanon-Israel border, raising concerns of further escalation along the frontier that has been active for the past five months of the Israel-Hamas war.

The paramedics association said the Israeli strike was "a flagrant violation of humanitarian work."

India releases second tranche of ₹500 crore for Bhutan infra work

Press Trust of India
THIMPU

India has released the second tranche of ₹500 crore to Bhutan for the development of infrastructure related to the GyalSung Project.

This comes less than a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 23 concluded a fruitful two-day state visit to Bhutan.

During the visit, he assured Thimphu of New Delhi's firm support in its quest for development and agreed to provide ₹10,000 crore to the Himalayan nation over the next five years.

The second tranche was handed over by India's Ambassador to Bhutan Sudhakar Dalela to Bhutan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Lyonpo D N Dhungyel.

The first tranche of ₹500 crore was released on January 28 earlier this year.

Xi meets U.S. business executives in an attempt to attract foreign investment

Agence France-Prese
BEIJING

Economic growth rates in China have been waning for years with the latest target pegged at 5%

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with representatives of U.S. businesses on Wednesday as Beijing seeks to woo foreign investment and reassure American firms in the face of a slowing economy.

Officials are keen to bring in investment to kickstart growth as they battle a range of headwinds including a prolonged property-sector crisis, soaring youth unemployment and a global slowdown that is hammering demand for Chinese goods.

Hosting the group of executives at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, state broadcaster CCTV showed Mr. Xi chuckling as he expounded on what he characterised as the mutual reliance between Beijing and Washington.

Among the attendees was Cristiano Amon, CEO of Qualcomm, a major producer of semiconductors – which are at the forefront of U.S.-China tech rivalry.

Also in attendance was Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of private equity giant Blackstone.

History of friendly ties

Mr. Xi said that "the history of China-U.S. relations is a history of friendly exchanges between the two peoples".

Mr. Xi told the U.S. executives that "as long as both sides see each other as partners and show mutual respect, coexist in peace and cooperate for win-win results, China-U.S. relations will get better," according to a readout published by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Economic growth rates in China have been trending downwards for years, and Beijing this month set an annual target of "around 5%" – significantly lower than the break-neck rates that powered the country's meteoric rise to prosperity.

Security beefed up for Chinese workers after Pak. bombing

Agence France-Presse
PESHAWAR

Pakistan ramped up security guarding Chinese engineers building Beijing-linked projects in the nation's northwest, an official said on Wednesday, a day after five workers were killed in a suicide bombing.

Beijing is Islamabad's closest regional ally and Pakistan has benefitted from billions of dollars of investment in recent years, but has struggled to guarantee the safety of Chinese migrant workers.

The five Chinese engineers – plus their Pakistani driver – were killed while travelling between Islamabad and a hydroelectric dam construction site in Dasu, in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

As a result, security was stepped up at more than two-dozen sites hosting Chinese engineers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sport

Stimac harps on inadequate preparation again

FOOTBALL

Amitabha Das Sharma
GUWAHATI

The absence of adequate practice and a disjointed performance by India allowed Afghanistan to post a comeback win here in a round two Group A match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, according to India head coach Igor Stimac.

The defeat dealt a big blow to India's aspirations, but Stimac insisted that India still has a chance to qualify for the third round. With Qatar beating Kuwait (2-1) in the other group match later on Tuesday night, India continued to be in second spot with four points, pushing Afghanistan (also on four) to third with a better goal average.

Coachspeak: Stimac reiterated his demand for a minimum three-week camp before India's international engagements. RITU RAJ KONWAR

"Of course, we can qualify. We will be a different team after the long camp that will come up after the ISL (ahead of the next match against Kuwait) and hopefully get things right in the end and qualify to the third round," said Stimac. "Half of our players are unable to bring that intensity which is needed to take the game to the desired level. I cannot change that in five days (the practice time India got before the match) and I have been saying this many times over in the last few months," referring to the Intercontinental Cup and SAFF Championship wins in 2023.

> Half of our players are unable to bring that intensity which is needed to take the game to the desired level. I cannot change that in five days

Saying that the Indian players needed to be reoriented about their playing positions since many of them play a secondary role for their clubs who use foreign recruits for crucial spots, Stimac insisted on the necessity of a "proper" preparation time.

"It is about the intensity of work you can produce over a certain period of time, which can help the players maintain the level of self-confidence needed for such games. It will also help them tackle the pressure that comes in a situation where you need to win," Stimac, who faced angry fans with "go back" slogans after the defeat, said.

Stimac said, reiterating his demand for a minimum three-week camp to prepare the Indian team before its international engagements.

"These are the same players who played between May and July (2023) but are unable to bring that same intensity to the game. Afghanistan is not better than the teams like Kuwait and Lebanon which we dominated and defeated during that period," said Stimac while re-

Sindhu, men's doubles pairs advance in Spain Masters

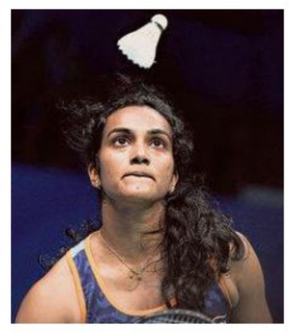
BADMINTON

Sports Bureau

P.V. Sindhu got the better of Canada's Wen Yu Zhang 21-16, 21-12 in 30 minutes to enter the women's singles pre-quarterfinals at the Madrid Spain Masters Super 300 badminton tournament in Madrid on Wednesday. In another match, Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon beat Ashmita Chaliha 21-13, 21-11.

In men's singles, K. Sathish Kumar went down 10-21, 14-21 to Singapore's Jia Heng Jason Teh in the opening round.

However, in men's doubles, M.R. Arjun and Dhruv Kapila, seeded eighth, got the better of the Mexican duo of Job Castillo and Luis Montoya 21-18, 21-17, while Krishna Prasad Garaga and K. Sai Pratheek overcame Canadians Nyl Yakura and Adam Dong 21-18, 28-30, 21-11 to make the last 16 on Tuesday.



Sindhu. PTI

It was curtains for Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand in the opening round of women's doubles. The fifth-seeded Indian pair lost 18-21, 22-20, 18-21 to USA's Annie Xu and Kerry Xu.

In singles, Mithun Manjunath, Sameer Verma, and Aadya Variyath lost in the qualifiers.

The results (round of 32):
Women: P.V. Sindhu bt Wen Yu Zhang (Can) 21-16, 21-12; Ratchanok Intanon (Tha) bt Ashmita Chaliha 21-13, 21-11.
Doubles: Annie Xu & Kerry Xu (USA) bt Treesa Jolly & Gayatri Gopichand 21-18, 20-22, 21-18.
Men: Jia Heng Jason Teh (Sgp) bt K. Sathish Kumar 21-10, 21-14.
Doubles: M.R. Arjun & Dhruv Kapila bt Job Castillo & Luis Montoya (Mex) 21-18, 21-17; Krishna Prasad Garaga & K. Sai Pratheek bt Nyl Yakura & Adam Dong (Can) 21-18, 28-30, 21-11.

NEW PEAKS

SRH registers highest total in IPL, the game sees record aggregate

K.R. DEEPAK

Sunrisers' 277 for three against Mumbai Indians in Hyderabad on Wednesday is the highest in IPL history, eclipsing the 263 for five by Royals Challengers Bangalore versus Pune Warriors in the 2013 edition. The match aggregate of 523 is not only the biggest in an IPL game, but also in men's T20s (previous record: 517, SA vs. WI, 2023).

MAXIMUM OF MAXIMUMS

A record 38 sixes smashed in Sunrisers-Mumbai Indians game

K.R. DEEPAK

The 38 sixes recorded in the SRH-MI game is the highest for a T20 match, surpassing the 37 witnessed in an Afghanistan Premier League contest in 2018 and in a Caribbean Premier League fixture in 2019. Sunrisers hammered 18 sixes while Mumbai Indians tonked 20. Abhishek and Klaasen led the chart with seven each.

SOLACE

Mumbai Indians' spirited chase earns it a record but not a win

K.R. DEEPAK

MI's 246 for five, in pursuit of SRH's gargantuan 277 for three, is the highest score in the IPL for a team batting second (Tilak Varma top-scored with 64). The previous best was the 226 for six scored by RR against KXIP in Sharjah in 2020. Unlike MI, RR was successful in the chase on that occasion.

DOUBLE CENTURY

Rohit plays his 200th IPL match in Mumbai Indians colours

ANI

Mumbai Indians' star batter and former skipper Rohit Sharma played his 200th match in the league for his franchise, when he took to the field against Sunrisers Hyderabad, on Wednesday. Rohit had earlier represented the now-defunct Deccan Chargers between 2008 and 2010, playing 45 matches for the team.

Records go for a six as SRH outshines MI in run fest

After Head, Abhishek and Klaasen power Cummins' side to the League's highest total of 277, Hardik's men stay in the hunt for a major part of the chase before losing steam and finishing at 246

IPL-17

V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

Unstoppable: Klaasen, Abhishek and Head tore the Mumbai Indians attack apart, hitting fours and sixes at will. K.R. DEEPAK

Travis Head played a gem of an innings, Abhishek Sharma was stunning and Heinrich Klaasen flamboyant as the trio fashioned Sunrisers Hyderabad's impressive 31-run win against Mumbai Indians in a high-scoring IPL league match at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on Wednesday night.

Rollicking start

When Mumbai began the daunting chase of 278, it was obvious that the target was too high.

This despite Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan ensuring a rollicking start before both fell, going for big shots.

Later, local boy Tilak Varma showcased his power-hitting with a brilliant knock but that was not good enough as Sunrisers captain Pat Cummins struck the big blows – removing Rohit and Tilak – at crucial moments to short-circuit Mumbai Indians' hopes.

Tim David too came up with some big hits towards the end but Mumbai needed something extraordinary and it didn't happen.

Earlier, Mumbai's gamble to put the host in backfired badly as the bowling looked ordinary, the exception being Jasprit Bumrah.

Sunrisers posted the highest total of 277 for three in IPL history, eclipsing the previous best of 263 for five by Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Pune Warriors in 2013.

The home team's move to prefer Head to Marco Jansen proved to be a great one as the Australian opener, dropped on five at mid-off by Tim David off Hardik Pandya's first ball in the second over of the innings, played some extravagant strokes, especially treating 18-year-old South African left-arm pacer Kwena Maphaka with disdain, pulling him nonchalantly for two huge sixes and straight driving to the fence with aplomb.

Southpaw Abhishek was equal to the occasion against both pace and spin, pulling pacer Gerald Coetzee for a six and later hitting leg-spinner Piyush Chawla for three sixes in his first over.

Abhishek was busy hitting boundaries at will and later the South African duo of the classy Aiden Markram and the more belligerent Klaasen joined hands for an unbroken fourth-wicket stand of 116 off 55 balls to put the visitors totally on the defensive.

Next assignment

SRH: March 31 vs **GT**
Ahmedabad, 3.30 p.m.

MI: April 1 vs **RR**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Mayank Agarwal c David b Hardik 11 *(13b, 1x4)*, Travis Head c Dhir b Coetzee 62 *(24b, 9x4, 3x6)*, Abhishek Sharma c Dhir b Chawla 63 *(23b, 3x4, 7x6)*, Aiden Markram (not out) 42 *(28b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Heinrich Klaasen (not out) 80 *(34b, 4x4, 7x6)*; Extras (b-4, lb-1, nb-2, w-12): 19; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 277.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-45 (Mayank, 4.1 overs), 2-113 (Head, 7.5), 3-161 (Abhishek, 10.6).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Maphaka 4-0-66-0, Hardik 4-0-46-1, Bumrah 4-0-36-0, Coetzee 4-0-57-1, Chawla 2-0-34-1, Mulani 2-0-33-0.

MUMBAI INDIANS
Rohit Sharma c Abhishek b Cummins 26 *(12b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Ishan Kishan c Markram b Shahbaz 34 *(13b, 2x4, 4x6)*, Naman Dhir c Cummins b Unadkat 30 *(14b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Tilak Varma c Mayank b Cummins 64 *(34b, 2x4, 6x6)*, Hardik Pandya c Klaasen b Unadkat 24 *(20b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Tim David (not out) 42 *(22b, 2x4, 3x6)*, Romario Shepherd (**Impact Player in place of Maphaka**) (not out) 15 *(6b, 2x4, 1x6)*; Extras (b-1, lb-4, nb-1, w-5): 11; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 246.

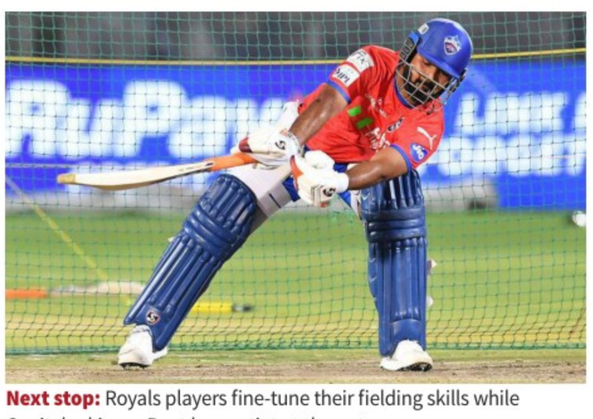
FALL OF WICKETS
1-56 (Kishan, 3.2), 2-66 (Rohit, 4.3), 3-150 (Dhir, 10.4), 4-182 (Tilak, 14.1), 5-224 (Hardik, 17.6).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 4-0-53-0, Unadkat 4-0-47-2, Shahbaz 3-0-39-1, Cummins 4-0-35-2, Umran (**Impact Player in place of Head**) 1-0-15-0, Markande 4-0-52-0.

Toss: MI.
PoM: Abhishek.
SRH won by 31 runs.

Samson's RR determined to build on momentum, Pant's DC eyes first win

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR



Next stop: Royals players fine-tune their fielding skills while Capitals skipper Pant has a stint at the nets. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Rajasthan Royals got most things right on Sunday.

Skipper Sanju Samson won the toss and justified his decision to bat first with a superb 82 not out. The move to promote Riyan Parag paid off, and the bowlers did a good job too, as Royals won by 20 runs to open its IPL campaign on a satisfactory note against L:ucknow Super Giants.

They will look to capitalise on that when they take on Delhi Capitals, which should be keen to recover from its disappointing opening fixture, when the two neighbouring franchises face off on Thursday. Capitals were beaten by Punjab Kings by four wickets, after a not-so-good effort with the bat.

The batter most in focus was, of course, Rishabh Pant, who was returning to cricket after his horrific car accident in December, 2022. He made only 18 and should be eager to play one of his eye-catching knocks.

Capitals, playing their second successive away match, will also want their Australian openers David Warner and Mitchell Marsh to convert starts. The bowling – featuring the formidable spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel – is strengthened by the arrival of the South African quick Anrich Nortje. But the Capitals bowlers are up against one of the strongest batting line-ups in the tournament. Apart from Samson, they would be facing the likes of Jos Buttler, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shimron Hetmyer and Dhruv Jurel.

There is variety in the Royals attack, in the form of Trent Boult, R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal and Sandeep Sharma.

TODAY'S MATCH

RAJASTHAN ROYALS vs. DELHI CAPITALS

Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **27**
RR **14** | DC **13**

PREVIOUS MEETING
RR won by 57 runs, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Parag's hard work rewarded

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Royals may have surprised many when Riyan Parag came out to bat at No. 4 against Lucknow Super Giants, but that was something the Royals management seems to have thought off well before Season 17 of the IPL started.

Parag celebrated his promotion up the order in style, making a 29-ball 43. Coach Kumar Sangakkara was pleased as he talked about the strategic move at the press conference on Wednesday.

"We looked at how Riyan performed over the years," Sangakkara said. "It is a difficult thing for someone like Riyan who has an overall game to only get the toughest parts of the game, where he has to come in and up the run rate at the death.

"The hard work he has put in and the runs he has scored in the domestic season played a part in that decision."

Delhi Capitals' director of cricket Sourav Ganguly said his team needed to bat better. "With Rishabh Pant back, the batting is stronger," he said.

"If we bat well, we will win a lot of matches because we have the bowling."

Ruturaj's bold calls should hold CSK in good stead

Pace is ace: The speedsters, rather than spinners, delivered for CSK against Titans. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

One of the trademarks of a typical Chennai Super Kings team, especially while playing at its fortress, M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, is having a plethora of spinners at its disposal.

And it would have come as a surprise that Ruturaj Gaikwad's side brought death-bowling specialist Matheesha Pathirana into the bowling line-up in place of spinner Maheesh Theekshana for the fixture against Gujarat Titans at Chepauk on Tuesday.

Uncharacteristic move

CSK's uncharacteristic move worked like magic, on a pitch with a tinge of green on it, as the five-time IPL champion trumped GT by 63 runs, with each of its five medium pacers taking at least one wicket.

Not a spinners' day

Ravindra Jadeja not being required to bowl his full quota of overs (2-0-15-0), and the opposition tweakers Rashid Khan (4-0-49-2) and R. Sai Kishore (3-0-28-1) finding it tough to create an impact made CSK's decision to tinker with its combination look even better.

CSK's ploy, though, would not have solely relied on the nature of the track. The think-tank saw the upside in having two death bowlers in Pathirana and Mustafizur Rahman – which also helped get the best out of Tushar Deshpande who could finish his spell (4-0-21-2) by the 16th over – and went with the horses-for-courses option.

GT seamer Mohit Sharma voiced the same opinion during the post-match press conference.

"I feel CSK would have gone with two spinners if the pitch was drier," Mohit said. "Every team comes as a package. And, depending on the scenario at the ground, sides look to bring out the best Playing XI," he added.

It is still early days in Ruturaj's captaincy career and the fact that he is not averse to taking bold calls to optimise the resources he has – something that M.S. Dhoni is known for – should hold him in good stead.

INBRIEF

Bayern's Kane returns; Neuer doubtful for Dortmund match

Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane returned to team training on Wednesday while captain Manuel Neuer remains doubtful ahead of Saturday's home clash against Borussia Dortmund. Bayern released a statement saying Kane "was able to take part in team training again", having returned to individual training on Monday. Neuer tore a muscle fibre on duty with Germany, missing both of his country's friendlies.

SPNI to become new home for NZ cricket in India

International cricket played in New Zealand will be live telecast and live-streamed in India on Sony Pictures Network India (SPNI) platforms for seven years, starting May 2024. The men's and women's international games in New Zealand will thus be telecast on Sony Sports and live-streamed on *Sony LIV* till April 2031. The highlight of the deal will be India men's tours in 2026-27 and 2030-31.

Djokovic splits with coach Ivanisevic

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic has split with coach Goran Ivanisevic, ending their association that began in 2018 and included 12 Grand Slam titles for the Serbian tennis player. In a post on Instagram published on Wednesday, Djokovic said he stopped working with Ivanisevic "a few days ago". "Our on-court chemistry had its ups and downs," Djokovic wrote, "but our friendship was always rock solid."

Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden in Miami semifinals

Top seeds Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden beat John-Patrick Smith and Sem Verbeek 3-6 7-6(4), [10-7] in the doubles quarterfinals of the $10,404,205 ATP Masters tennis in Miami, USA.

Other results: $40,000 ITF women, Kofu, Japan: First round: Ankita Raina bt Kyoka Okamura 7-6(1), 6-2; Erika Sema bt Rutuja Bhosale 6-1, 6-3.
Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals: Ankita & Rutuja bt Wakako Hino & Anzu Inoue 6-1, 6-2.

Delhi beats Haryana in first match of kho kho nationals

Delhi boys beat Haryana by four points in the inaugural match of the 56th National kho kho championship at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex on Wednesday. The championship was inaugurated by former Lok Sabha Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan.

CFC's Bijay first Indian to sign for Latin American club

Promising Indian footballer Bijay Chhetri has completed his move to Colon Futbol Club (Uruguay) from Chennaiyin FC (CFC). It's a loan until the end of the year with Colon FC retaining the option to make the signing permanent. He became the first Indian to sign a professional contract with a Latin American club. Colon FC is an 116-year-old club based in Montevideo and competing in second division of Uruguay.

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Tennis: Miami Open, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 4.30 a.m. (Friday)

Karnataka's maiden Ranji Trophy title winners feted in a grand function

The event was got up to celebrate the golden jubilee of the triumph, a result that ended Bombay's 15-year stranglehold on the national championship

CRICKET

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

The golden jubilee of Karnataka's maiden Ranji Trophy triumph (1973-74) was celebrated at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Wednesday, with a glittering felicitation function organised for the victorious team members.

On March 27, 1974 in Jaipur, Karnataka, led by the off-spin wizard EAS Prasanna, beat a strong Rajasthan side captained by Hanumant Singh by 185 runs to lift the first of eight Ranji Trophy titles.

The nostalgia-filled event on Wednesday was graced by Prasanna, G.R. Viswanath, B.S. Chandrasekhar, Brijesh Patel, Syed Kirmani, A.V. Jayaprakash, B. Sudhakar Rao, Sanjay Desai, S. Vijayprakash, B. Siddaramu, R. Arunkumar and B. Raghunath. Tributes were also paid to the three departed souls V.S. Vijay Kumar, B. Vijayakrishna and K. Lakshman.

One for the album: Members of the 1974 Karnataka Ranji triumph at the felicitation event. (*From left*) S. Vijayaprakash, Siddrama, Arun Kumar, Brijesh Patel, B.S. Chandrashekar, EAS Prasanna, G.R. Vishwanath, Syed Kirmani, Sudhakar Rao, B. Raghunath, A.V. Jayaprakash and Sanjay Desai. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

"The win was very satisfying," Prasanna recollected. "The likes of Kirmani, Jayaprakash, Vijayakrishna lifted their games and scored on a wicket [in the final] that was conducive to our kind of bowling. The Karnataka team may not have looked very good on paper, but we were very effective on the pitch."

But much before Chandrasekhar bowled last man C.G. Joshi, the Karnataka team had slipped into a different kind of euphoria. On the rest day between the third and fourth days, members had partaken in Holi festivities and ingested *Bhang*, unknowingly. "It took us two days to come down to earth [from the high]," Viswanath said, as the audience guffawed. "Everybody in the team was just laughing. But I had become very serious. The England tour was coming up, and I was a bit worried about that. I didn't get runs in the final.

"But the important thing was that we won. The train journey back to Bangalore, which was supposed to be for two days, took nearly 3.5 days as the train stopped everywhere. But not a single passenger complained that the train was late."

That last lap of victory was not without its fair share of drama. "We thought all arrangements for our return journey would be taken care of," recalled Prasanna. "But when we reached Delhi, we didn't have tickets for Bangalore. A railway official recognised us and got us tickets, via Chennai. Even our Chennai-Bangalore tickets weren't booked! And by the time we reached Bangalore, all the joy had come down."

One of the highlights of the campaign was Karnataka's victory over Bombay in the semifinal, which ended the latter's 15-year stranglehold on the title, and Prasanna's dismissal of Sunil Gavaskar.

"It is one of the greatest deliveries I have ever seen," said Viswanath. "I was standing at first slip. It wasn't a *doosra*, *teesra* or leg-cutter. Just a proper off-spinner that left the batter slightly. Sunil had covered everything, but may have just left a millimetre open. And Pras got him."

Shubhankar, Lahiri look to end title-drought at the cash-rich Hero Indian Open golf tournament

Rakesh Rao
GURUGRAM

The country's richest and the flagship golf event - the $2.25 million Hero Indian Open - awaits a homegrown champion since 2017.

This week, 27 professionals and four amateurs will present the home challenge when the 57th edition of the premier event tees off at the DLF Golf and Country Club on Thursday. They will be up against tough overseas challengers, including 40 European Tour winners with close to 90 titles amongst them.

After S.S.P. Chowrasia defended the title in 2017, only three editions were held while thrice in succession the event had to be cancelled owing to the pandemic.

In good touch: Shubhankar will carry the confidence of finishing tied-seventh in the Porsche Singapore Classic. GETTY IMAGES

For the record, the top prize is $382,500, the runner-up gets $247,500 and the third-placed will receive $141,750.

World No. 78 Denmark's Ras Hojgaard, a four-time winner on the Tour, is the highest ranked in the field that includes 20 players from the Top-200 list. Though defending champion Marcel Siem misses the event following a recent hip-surgery, his German compatriot runner-up Yannik Paul is back.

Ranked 188, Shubhankar Sharma returns to his 'home' course as the best placed Indian. The presence of seasoned Anirban Lahiri also gives hope. However, in the past, the 'projected' Indian favourites have seldom lived up to the pre-event expectations. In all these years, only Ali Sher, Jyoti Randhawa and Chowrasia have proved different.

Going by the recent form, Shubhankar carries the confidence of finishing tied-seventh in the Porsche Singapore Classic last week.

Describing the DLF course as "one of the toughest that we play all year," Shubhankar reiterated, "This is home for me. I spent my teenage years here and all my evenings were spent practising on the putting green, playing putting matches with friends.

"And every year I've become a better player and a better person. I have a better understanding of the game and something that I'm really proud of – the journey that I've taken till now," said Shubhankar, whose search for a third Tour title continues.

Lahiri, the 2015 winner and looking to add another Tour title since then, returns to his home Open after five years. "I am desperate to win," said Lahiri, ranked 401 in the world.

Eye on rankings
The two-time Olympian is also keen to raise his World ranking in order to make it to the Paris Games.

He is currently ranked behind Shubhankar (188) and Gaganjeet Bhullar (240). India, at best, can get two entries in the men's section.

This week, the conditions are set to test the golfers with the Indians really not getting any 'home advantage'.

Brazil fights back to hold Spain

Reuters
MADRID

Brazil's Lucas Paqueta scored a penalty deep in added time to rescue a fortunate 3-3 draw with Spain in an ill-tempered friendly at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Tuesday.

At Wembley, Jude Bellingham struck in stoppage time to earn England a 2-2 draw with Belgium.

Important results: At Madrid: Spain 3 (Rodri 12-pen & 87-pen, Olmo 36) drew with Brazil 3 (Rodrygo 40, Endrick 50, Paqueta 90+6-pen).
At Frankfurt: Germany 2 (Fuellkrug 85, Mittelstaedt 11) bt Netherlands 1 (Veerman 4).
At London: England 2 (Toney 17, Bellingham 90+5-pen) drew with Belgium 2 (Tielemans 11, 36).
At Marseille: France 3 (Fofana 18, Muani 25, Giroud 72) bt Chile 2 (Nunez 6, Osorio 82).
At Ljubljana: Slovenia 2 (Cerin 72, Elsnik 80) bt Portugal 0.

Shubhankar returns to complete unfinished business

Uthra Ganesan
GURUGRAM

Shubhankar Sharma is back home. The highest ranked Indian in the field and the only one on the DP World Tour (European Tour) at the moment has not won a title since 2018 and the Hero Indian Open, starting Thursday, hasn't had a home winner since 2017.

Over the next four days, Shubhankar would be hoping to change both.

His previous best here was a tied seventh finish in 2018 after leading on the final day and by his own admission, both him and the course have changed. "That was a long time ago. I was in good form, very similar to what I am now. But now I have a lot more experience.

Different approach
"My approach will be very different from what it used to be. The course has changed too. It is one of the tougher courses we play on.

"The rough has grown a lot, the trees have grown, it's much thicker and lush around the fairways.

"There's a way to score here, but it's all about consistency. You can't overpower this course," he declared in an interaction here on Wednesday.

Only 27 and already into his 12th season as a professional, there is no world-weariness in Shubhankar. "I don't want to make it sound like I've been out here for so long and not having fun. I've had the time of my life, I've made so many friends, travelled all around the world. And over the years I've learned more about myself and gained experience," he added.

That learning is reflected in his approach to setbacks. "Golf is a lot like life, the ability to bounce back is very important. I think I'm good at accepting how things are and pushing myself in the right way and not getting consumed by my own anger or frustrations or expectations.

"Also, spending time off the course in the right way, with the family is so important," explained the Chandigarh golfer who is also the brand ambassador for city based Roundglass Sports.

It's not just the mind that has matured – over time, his game too has evolved. "Earlier, I used to spend a lot of time on the range. Now, that time is divided between golf, gym, physio, recovery etc, it's become more regimented."

Journey of maturity
"It's been a journey of maturity. I guess that's the difference between top players – the way they manage their time after a certain level, that's what gives them excellent consistency. In that aspect, I think I've really grown," he added.

The Olympics, not surprisingly, is on the radar, but Shubhankar is not thinking too much about it at the moment.

"I am very happy to be in the reckoning. My goal right now is to just play well in every event I enter, that should take care of everything else. Playing well at the British Open last year gave me the belief that I can compete against the best at the highest stage."

Costantini's return as foreign coach of Indian TT team appears bright

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Italy's Massimo Costantini's return to the Indian table tennis team (men and women) as foreign coach appears very bright.

"We have shortlised Massimo among four coaches. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) is processing the names as per its norms. An International Committee of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) was formed to shortist the coaches," said a source to *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

The 66-year-old Italian was the Indian coach on two previous occasions – 2009 to 2010 and 2016 to 2018.

During this period, India won a record eight medals at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and two bronze at the 2018 Asian Games.

Massimo has been liked and admired by quite a few Indian players including 10-time National champion Sharath Kamal.

Huge expectations
There are huge expectations that the former Italy International will take charge of the Indian team before the Paris Olympics. After Massimo left in 2018, the team hasn't had the services of a foreign coach.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Vimaljith shines with a hat-trick

BENGALURU: K.K. Vimaljith scored a hat-trick to help Ronaldo FC whip William FC 9-0 in a KSFA 'C' division football league match here.

The results: Blue Diamond FC 2 (Yogendra 29, Sujith 53) bt Universal Blues FC 1 (S. Shahid 58); Ronaldo FC 9 (K.K. Vimaljith 9, 34, 43, S. Ajith 14, 56, T.S. Niranjan 22, Amaldev Shibi 23, Dipaangkor Brahma 60, Kevin Xavier Lawrence 60+1) bt William FC 0; Garden City FC 3 (Ameer Suhail 25, Harshak 48, Prashanth Puducode 57) bt Vanquishers Sports 1 (Sam Verghese 45); Francis Xaviers FC 2 (Lawrence 12, Sendil 56) bt VPS FC 1 (Suhas 7).

Big win for Pinakini

Pinakini BC, Gauribidanur, thrashed Rovers BC, Dharwad, 96-56 in the final phase of the Karnataka State rural basketball league.

The results: Pinakini, Gauribidanur 96 (Venugopal 29, Ravi Chandra 26) bt Rovers, Dharwad 56 (Vishwa 29, Sunil 14).

Vivekananda, Mandya 71 (Darshan 17, Raghavendra 16) bt Mallasajjan, Dharwad 68 (Chinmay 20); Mangalore BC 59 (Prasthik 18, Rohan 12) bt Raising Star, Mysuru 48 (Shamanth 15, Sahil 12).

Davangere BC 81 (Vishnu 26, Sachin 19) bt Vivekananda 77 (Shashank Gowda 28, Shashank Raj 16).

Pinakini 74 (Venugopal 30, Pavan 17) bt Vijayanagar, Mysore 69 (Bhuvan Kumar 25, Vikas 16); Hoysala, Hassan 88 (Kiran 15, Prabhuraj 10) bt Kanaka, Kolar 63 (Jagadeesh 18, Hemanth 13).